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MY COUNTRY

SHAW DESMOND

My Country

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My Country

A Play in Four Acts

by Shaw Desmond

Author of "Democracy," "Passion," &c., &c.

LONDON: C. W. DANIEL, LTD.
Graham House, Tudor Street, E.C. 4
1921

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(NOTE.—Throughout, "right" or "left" is the spectator's right or left, not the player's.)

CHARACTERS

Dawn Arran	*General Arran's daughter.*
Richard Despard . . .	*Her lover.*
Jim Durgan	*Syndicalist leader.*
The Countess Pologna Salandra	*Latin Syndicalist leader and anarchist.*
Bill Tutty	*The Man from the East End.*
Lancelot Fitz	*Writer and critic.*
Old Breschoff	*Head of the International Peace Union and political exile.*
His Wife.	
John Bluett	*A Labour M.P.*
Sylvestre Vallon . . .	*French Socialist leader.*
Adolph Gutenmann . . .	*German Socialist leader.*
General Arran	*Dawn's father and Anglo-Irishman—retired.*
His Wife	*Dawn's stepmother.*
The Right Hon. Cathcart Lily	*Prime Minister of England.*
The Bishop of Kensington .	*A militant Churchman.*
Professor Bastable . . .	*An eminent scientist.*

Voices in the Crowd:

The Man in the Crowd,

The Woman in the Crowd,

etc. etc.

The first Doctor.

The second Doctor.

The Maid.

A Nurse.

Policemen, Labour Leaders, *etc.*

The action takes place in the 1*st Act, just before the outbreak of the Great War, at the headquarters of the Workers' Party in London; in the* 2*nd Act, after* 12 *months have elapsed, in* General Arran's *flat in Buckingham Gate, London; in the* 3*rd, a few days afterwards in Trafalgar Square; and in the last, about a year after Act III., in an ambulance on the West Front.*

MY COUNTRY

ACT I

Characters

Dawn Arran.	Bill Tutty.
Richard Despard.	Old Breschoff and his Wife.
Jim Durgan.	John Bluett.
The Countess Salandra.	Sylvestre Vallon.
Lancelot Fitz.	Adolph Gutenmann.

Eight or nine other Labour Leaders, both British and foreign.

It is about 11 *of a thundery August morning in London, just before outbreak of the Great War. A broad room, the headquarters of the Workers' Party, is shown, furnished with a board table across centre of room, with a large chair in middle and smaller chairs on all sides except side nearest audience. It is lighted by two windows on the right, a fireplace occupying the wall opposite, whilst the only door, a large one, is on the right-hand side of the back wall. A rather heavy room, bare of curtains and with severe furniture, the gloom of which is only relieved by the gleam of silk in the corners where the Trade Unions have left their banners after a demonstration, a banner of smoky red however standing facing*

audience almost behind the chairman's seat in middle of table—on it written in gold lettering: Workers of the World—Unite! there being also some heavy portraits of the presentation type on the walls. The windows let in a strong light, which however only accentuates the utilitarian gloom of the place.

———

DAWN ARRAN *with* RICHARD DESPARD *and* JIM DURGAN *come in,* DAWN *leading, swinging the door open as she comes, characteristically. She is a dusky-haired girl in the early twenties, her grey eyes and the shot-red of her hair having something of her name. Her hair she does low on the back of her neck and her long limbs are set off by a rather close-fitting green skirt. With her lightsome eyes she is not only a dreamer—she has a jaw and is apt to be difficult, her outward reserve concealing a passionate temperament which shows itself in Irish ways of saying and doing things. She moves easily and assuredly, if impulsively, through life.*

Her lover, RICHARD DESPARD, *is the slender, determined idealist of a transition stage when middle-class men are showing themselves singly side by side with the rising democracy, and is a refined but not over-refined type of modern Englishman—a university man. There is something spiritually impressive about his slender figure, fine head, and mobile, clean-shaven mouth, but one would not say he was humanly exciting any more than Christ would be humanly exciting if he were on earth to-day. Yet he feels pregnantly about his ideas and has veins of deep*

emotion. His naturalness makes him the friend of all types but they never get close to him, which is neither his fault nor theirs.

His pacifist comrade, JIM DURGAN, *is in many ways his antithesis. He is a big Irishman, obstinate, pugnacious, even brutal at times in his fanaticism, but with something beautiful though fated in him. Eruptive, and apt to break in on any conversation or any head. A revolutionary Syndicalist, he wishes to fight war by a General Strike of all industries and by the direct action of the barricade and insurrection, whilst* DESPARD, *who stands for the political side of the Workers' Party, wishes to use the Strike only as a last resource, and then but as a weapon of passive resistance, without violence.*

DAWN (*looking round curiously*). So this is the place, is it ?

JIM DURGAN (*seriously, almost solemnly*). Yes, this is the place.

DAWN (*going from picture to picture on the right, without turning her head, her hands behind her back, provokingly*). . . . of demagoguery, brotherly love, and the greatest good of the greatest number. (*Facing round sharply*) What do you think you are going to do ?

JIM DURGAN (*pointing to the red banner*). *That's* what we're going to do.

DAWN (*reading slowly*). " Workers — of — the — World—Unite ! " . . . You wait till the guns begin to go off.

JIM (*quietly, heavily*). We will, by God !

DAWN (*looking quickly at him*). What do you mean by that ? I never knew before that you could swear.

DESPARD (*breaking in quietly*). Who's coming to the meeting Jim ? They tell me that Gutenmann of Germany and Vallon of France will be there with . . .

DAWN (*determinedly and with a show of temper looking at Jim and ignoring her lover*). I asked : What do you mean by that ?

JIM (*almost contemptuously*). What do I mean by that ? D'ye think that you or your class would understand if I put the word to it ! Why should I tell you the plans of my own class . . . (*bitterly*) you . . . you're a patriot you know. But I can tell ye this—the man behind the gun won't always wear a red jacket or a khaki one—some day he'll wear corduroy.

DAWN. You mean if Germany fights us you'll leave your country in the lurch ?

JIM. *My* country. I have no country—my class has no country. *Yours* owns everything — the land ; the factories ; the houses . . . and . . . *us*. (*Ironically*) *My* country.

DESPARD (*in forced lightness*). Oh Jim, you talk like a Social Democratic tract. I'm a peace man—I hate war—I always said I would fight it—but I come from a family which has given many soldiers to England, a family with passion in it—we Despards under impulse do queer things—and (*laughing*) 'pon me honour I don't know what I might not do if it came to a fight for the flag . . . (*earnestly*) for there *is* a flag.

JIM. Flag! (*Pointing to the red banner*) There's my flag—the flag of the men of no-country—the flag of the dispossessed. The Red Flag.

DAWN. So that's what it all comes to Dick—your talk about this meeting of International labour leaders to stop war—all your pacifism. It means leaving England in the lurch—it means trampling the Union Jack in the dust—it means treachery—that's what it means. You cowards! How I despise you all.

DESPARD. Surely Dawn we are not going to start that quarrel about my pacifism again. It doesn't mean anything of the sort. It means substituting the tongue for the sword—arbitration for war. These Frenchmen and Germans, like the others the Workers' Party have invited here to-day, are just as true to the Tricolour, the Black, White and Red, and the other flags, as you are to the Union Jack, but they want to see if we can't prevent a European War. They want to talk things over.

DAWN (*contemptuously*). Talk! Always talk. Never action.

JIM. No, not talk. This time—we'll act. If the politicians want war, faith! they shall have it. The day *they* declare war—*we'll* declare war too—war on society. We'll lay their devil-factories in the dust; if they put arms in our hands we'll use them against themselves; we'll have the barricades in the streets; we'll declare the General Strike. If they want hell, they can have it. If they're ready to fight for *their* flags, we're ready to fight for *ours*—the Red Flag.

DAWN (*almost admiringly, to* DICK). I hate your

Internationalism but I could almost love it if you were like Jim Durgan . . . he is prepared to kill for his principles as I am for mine . . . but you—you only talk . . . like most Socialists. No wonder your wretched little debating society, with Lancelot Fitz, the biggest talker in London, at the head, calls itself "The Intellectuals." Give me Jim Durgan's Syndicalists. Anyhow we know whom we have to shoot when the war starts . . . (*turning to Jim*) but it's a shame Jim Durgan—you're too fine and big and clean and (*glancing at Dick*) whole-souled to die like a dog in the street. Why weren't you born a patriot ?

JIM. Because my sort are always born rebels . . . it's in the blood—a kind of call—the thing that makes you an Irishwoman with the Irish way of doing things in spite of your English mother and English rearing . . . just because, like myself, you were born there.

DAWN (*half to herself*). Perhaps . . . but . . .

JIM. Why, if I took the trouble, I'd make ye a good Syndicalist and Internationalist inside the year, just because you are what you are. 'Tis always the patriot that makes the best Internationalist—ye can't be International before you're national—'tis the cannibal that makes the best missionary.

DAWN (*turning to him, laughing, her eyes shining*). "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (*Abruptly, as though shaking something off*) But you can't. I'm a patriot all through. I'd turn from my own father, as I would turn from Dick there, if he turned against the flag. My country—right or wrong. It's the call of the blood, as you said.

DESPARD (*impatiently*). I think we've had enough talk about blood and blood-letting as preliminary to a peace meeting. The delegates will be here in a few minutes and Salandra (*he checks a trifle, awkwardly*) is coming a little before the time to talk over that French Syndicalist resolution.

DAWN. Talk—talk—always talk. (*Quickly*) And Salandra—who is Salandra ? Another talker ?

DESPARD (*irritated*). No, not another talker—a doer. She has looked down more rifle barrels than any woman in Europe—she is the heroine of the Lyons and Parma strikes—*the* Salandra.

JIM. I must be off—I promised to meet Masta the Italian outside a few minutes before the meeting. . . .

DAWN. And I also. . . . I'll come back after the meeting, (*sarcastically*) by which time I hope you'll have had time to settle the affairs of Europe with your . . . Salandra. (*She goes out with* JIM. DESPARD *walks up and down looking worried and puzzled, when within a few seconds the door opens, a head is put in, followed by a body—the very beautiful body of* POLOGNA SALANDRA.)

The COUNTESS SALANDRA *is an avowed anarchist and syndicalist—a Frenchwoman, a little over the middle twenties, of considerable personal attractions, who takes her title from a doubtful Italian count. This uncontrolled animal-woman is a fire-eater but, despite her touch of the theatrical, is brave, and, with her many detestable qualities, has some that are really fine. It is at this flashing, tigerish creature that* DICK DESPARD *looks with mingled apprehension*

and fascination as she sidles up to him, the first and second fingers of each hand thrust into the pockets of her short, tight-fitting jacket. She glances at him a moment and then turns off rapidly to the table where she busies herself with some papers.

SALANDRA (*facing round*). Hein !

DESPARD (*politely matter-of-fact*). Good morning !

SALANDRA. Oh you Engleeshmen—good mor-r-ning !—you are as cold as your fogs. (*Sarcastically*) Good mor-r-ning ! And zat after the Albert Hall meeting. Good mor-r-ning !

DESPARD (*apologetically*). I know I lost my head a bit—it was the wine at that International supper—perhaps I said more than I intended—we Despards are apt to lose our heads at times.

SALANDRA. And now you—(*with a vague gesture*)—add insult to injury. *Mon Dieu !* you apologise because you made love to a pretty woman who would have been offended if you had not. You say even—you were dr-r-unk. (*Coming close to him*) Am I so *la-ide*—ugly—that you must be drunk before you can make love to me ?

DESPARD (*miserably*). I don't think that's quite fair, Salandra. I did not what you call "make love" to you—I admired you—everyone admires you—and (*trying to be chivalrous*) I don't need to be drunk to . . . well, to l . . . that is to say (*stumbles a little*) admire you—and as a matter of fact I *was* not drunk—I—I . . . (*breaks down miserably*).

SALANDRA. Please do not continue to apologise.

First you say you "lose your head;" then that you were dr-r-unk; and now you finish by sharing me with other men as though I were a *fille de joie*. *Thank* you Mr Despard! (*She makes him a sweeping curtsey.*)

DESPARD (*by now completely broken down*). But I did not mean anything of the kind. I feel I am in a false position—I must explain. That Albert Hall evening after your anti-war speech, with the shouting crowds and all the excitement, I did not think of you as a woman, but as Salandra, *the* Salandra, as—if you will let me say it—a good comrade. And when people are comrades, they don't make love . . . I can't quite explain, but there's something mean about it (*as* SALANDRA *looks at him inscrutably*)—you know what I mean—in a way, no man makes love to his own wife after they are married and comrades . . . no, I don't mean that . . . (*breaks down again*).

SALANDRA. Perhaps Mr Despard this is ze English way of making love. (*Mischievously*) Many men have made love to me, but none like you. . . . I zink I rather like it . . . please go on.

DESPARD (*now desperate and rude*). What's the use! You don't or you won't understand. Perhaps you're a Latin and you can't. There *is* such a thing as nationality despite all Internationalism. There are chasms between nations that are unbridgable—sometimes I think they are the only chasms. (*With a rather lame dignity*) I am an Englishman.

SALANDRA (*beginning to be angry*). And you are ze Internationalist who told the people at ze Albert Hall that human beings were divided only by class—not by

nation. You are the *monsieur* who told me, Salandra, at the supper—when you were dr-r-unk—that you, though belonging to the right political wing of the Workers' Party and not to Jim Durgan's Syndicalist left wing, would, if war began, declare for ze International General Strike . . .

DESPARD (*breaking in hotly*). And I meant it and mean it—I hate war.

SALANDRA (*coming quickly to him and looking into his eyes*). Then we are comrades—and shall be something more, shall we not ? We two (*putting one arm comradely-caressing around his neck*) will go together and preach the Holy War through Europe—War against War ! We will . . .

The door is opened by BILL TUTTY, *East-Ender and democrat, an original with plastered hair who has the whimsical humour of his type with the good-natured though ironic scepticism of the man "who knows his class." He is eruptive, is* BILL, *and stimulating ; has a wife and half a dozen children down Poplar way ; and, though he has not yet got the Larger Vision, sees with painful clearness inside his ken.*

BILL TUTTY (*putting his head in through door*). Excuse me, ladies and gents—no offence—*when* you're quite finished. (*Closes the door with exaggerated politeness as he disappears.*)

DESPARD (*angrily breaking loose*). D——n it ! You see what you've done. A pretty business if Tutty talks. A most extraordinary thing. Last

night I had no idea of love-making—now I am up to my neck in it.

SALANDRA (*quietly*). Perhaps that was why you kissed me after supper.

DESPARD (*feeling himself a cad without knowing why*). Did I ? I suppose I did. I am awfully sorry—didn't know what I was doing—must have been mad . . .

SALANDRA. Or dr-r-unk.

DESPARD (*feeling he must say something*). You know I am not free. I am engaged to the noblest woman in the world . . . and I love her. So now you understand.

SALANDRA (*hissily*). So-o-o-o ! You are in love with Miss Ar-r-ran. But I tell you, you do not know what love is—and she cannot teach you. You cannot love a girl who is the enemy of ze people—of *your* people—*my* people. She is patriot—you are pacifist. She loves the soldier—her father is a soldier—you hate him. She stands for war—you do not. And she is cold—cold . . . (*Coming again close to him*) whilst I—my heart is warm, my arms warm, my lips warm. If you will come with me, we will conquer the world to our ideals. When the war comes, and it will come, you and I together will ride the whirlwind and direct the storm of the Str-r-ike. We shall live together days of action and nights of love . . . for . . . Dick . . . you do love me—I know it—I feel it—I could see it last night flaming in your eyes, for to you I am the Woman of Desire . . .

DESPARD (*feeling her hot breath on him, undecided, yielding*). Yes, you are the Woman of Desire . . .

but (*turning away from her as though trying to think*) . . . but . . . (*turns towards the door as the voices of the coming delegates are heard outside*).

They come in, singly and in pairs, spread a little, chatting together, and take their places as the chairman, JOHN BLUETT, *a large-faced, perfectly honest, perfectly tame, Labour Member, who now having the higher culture has given up tub-thumping, touches his bell and takes his place in the large chair at the centre of the table, the two chairs immediately adjoining him being occupied by* GUTENMANN (*on his right*) *and* VALLON (*on his left*), *sitting next them respectively being* JIM DURGAN *and* RICHARD DESPARD, *and next them, respectively,* BILL TUTTY *and* SALANDRA. *As* BLUETT *is fumbling with his papers and the others with theirs before he begins to speak,* OLD BRESCHOFF, *leaning on his wife's arm, enters, finally taking the vacant chair at the left-hand corner of the table, nearest audience, his wife taking a chair on his left and behind him so that her face is seen. During the proceedings, this Russian woman of furrowed lines and smooth black hair, watches tenderly over her husband, winner of the Nobel Prize and head of the International Union of Peace, the Tolstoyan non-resister of no nation, but with something Central European about him, whose weak, mild blue eyes conceal a peculiar tenacity of ideal and purpose, and who wins the admiration of the crank as of the man of common-sense—the respect of both friend and opponent.*

ADOLPH GUTENMANN *is the orthodox, disciplined German Socialist, with a weight in voice and manner which makes men listen when he speaks. His heavy white walrus moustache, great round spectacles, rubicund face, are the mark of an honest man, although a man of the "official" type.*

SYLVESTRE VALLON, *his friend the enemy, is his natural opposite. He stands for the real France, not the France of Paris. Idealist, revolutionary, thinker, as he is, he lacks the German's capacity to face the facts and peers through his darkened glasses like a half-blind man, as indeed he is, but a half-blind man with a beautiful soul, who has his eyes fixed beyond earthly horizons.*

Before BLUETT *gets to the end of his speech,* LANCELOT FITZ *glides in and slips into the only other vacant chair—that opposite* BRESCHOFF*—the others being occupied by the remainder of the delegates, some eight or nine in all, where he sits or lounges apparently indifferent but watching.* MR LANCELOT FITZ *is a literary critic and lecturer, with a tongue and pen dipped in corrosive sublimate, who, young though he is, has already acquired the national nickname of "the Gamin," which expresses the man. The hair parted in the centre and coming up to horn points, gives him something of the benevolently saturnine, whilst his springy glidy step brings him up at the most inopportune moments like a spirit of mischief which respects neither God nor man but loves both. Nobody sits on side of table opposite Chairman.*

JOHN BLUETT (*balmily and slightly condescending as though he were at a prayer meeting*). Friends! We have gathered here to-day for a great purpose, a solemn purpose, and for that purpose I am bidden by the Executive of the Workers' Party to welcome you, the chosen leaders of the workers of England, France and Germany, Austria, Italy and Holland and (*his notes and imagination failing him*) the—ahem!—other countries of Europe.

MANY VOICES. Hear-hear! Hear-hear!

JOHN BLUETT (*continuing*). It is sufficient perhaps if I say that my party, as befits a responsible party, has an open mind. It is not extreme. It waits to be convinced. Convince it. If our German and French comrades in particular can show us to-day the way to prevent war, my party will gladly co-operate, if that prevention can be secured by constitutional and political and not by the anarchistic methods of the General Strike. If they cannot show us the way—then we must only "Wait and see," a phrase which has now become, I believe, historic. At any rate, whatever be the result of our deliberations, deliberations upon which I think I may say the world of diplomacy, as the labour world, anxiously waits, the British Workers' Party will ever be proud of the fact that it issued the invitations to the International Labour Parties of the world to send their tried and trusted representatives to prevent the dreadful horrors of war—and whether that war be or be not averted, it is not too much to say that the voters of this country will remember when the General Election comes the

part it has played in the smoothing over of national differences.

I remember when I was a little boy at Sunday-school we used to have a hymn in which we sung about the beauty of the earth " From Greenland's icy mountains, to India's coral strand," and in which, if my memory serves me correctly, we were accustomed to say that " only man was vile." Although I do not see before me either Greenlander or Indian, I believe that the hymn is suitable to the present international gathering (LANCELOT FITZ, *who has just come in, makes a dubious noise in the throat*)—ahem ! that is to say (*blandly*) there are representatives here from all parts of the world, a world about to be made vile by a blighting war if we don't prevent it. Now it is not my business to stand between you . . . ahem ! . . . I mean, to talk, so before making room for the first speaker I will only conclude by expressing the devout hope that under the blessing of Providence our efforts to-day may result in the nearer coming of that day when " the sword shall be beaten into the ploughshare and the spear into the pruning hook." (*His introductory remarks are followed by a rather formal applause.*)

JIM DURGAN (*rising abruptly and speaking with a touch of the brogue, his speech being punctuated by enthusiastic approval from* SALANDRA *and one or two of the Latin representatives*). Mr Chairman : I will tell you for what we have *not* come here to-day—to hold a prayer meeting. The time for prayer is past—the time for action come. You have quoted Providence as I have heard it quoted at every Labour Congress I have ever

attended—one of our Trade Union specialities is Providence and politics—and after all your providential politics and all your parliamentary procedure through a century, where do we stand to-day I ask ye ? . . . on the edge of fratricidal war, in which comrade will slaughter comrade at the bidding of the enemy common to both—the master-class—the thing that has made us Syndicalists regard the politician as first cousin to the devil.

You have quoted your Sunday-school—well mine used to tell me that Providence helped those who helped themselves—(*with a dour humour*) it was later I learnt—God help those who are caught helping themselves. (*A laugh.*) But the master of tactics—your master and mine—said that Providence was on the side of the big battalions. I believe that. And we have the big battalions of the working class. We have right and we have might with us. We have had enough of the smooth trickery of politics—enough talk—now let us have action. How do ye think talk is going to meet the man or Thing which to-day holds the world, diplomats, soldiers, and politicians, in the hollow of its hand—the man who is the head of the International Shells Trust as he is of half a dozen others—the man who has paraphrased Napoleon and who says that Providence is on the side of the Big Bank Balance—who, man of no country that he is, will make shells for friend and enemy alike, for he is the chief of the other Red International, the International of blood and gold, the combine which is beating into us workers the lesson that combination

is the price of life ? For combination means domination . . .

FITZ. . . . And domination, damnation.

JIM DURGAN (*bitterly*). Dominate or be damned ! . . . Will you pray him and his combines with your politics ? It is your politics I tell ye that have sapped the marrow of the working class, making them into voting machines which find their activities in passing meaningless resolutions at Labour Congresses which they reverse at others, at playing the game of " Follow my Leader "—that is, of following their own tails—for no leader leads—he only follows . . .

JOHN BLUETT. But it is the Workers' Congress which has just passed the resolution against war.

JIM DURGAN (*contemptuously*). Congresses—arrah man ! what has struck ye !—congresses will pass anything. Every congress hall . . .

FITZ (*lightly bantering*). . . . every congress hall is the temple of the Great Majority—the Majority Eternal, and you believe in the rule of the majority—not the minority. *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

JOHN BLUETT (*forgetting his chairmanship*). Hear-hear ! Hear-hear !

FITZ (*flippant*). Always remembering that the minority is only right for the time—the majority never.

JIM DURGAN (*stubbornly*). And I do believe in the majority—but it is the majority that you politicals have hazed and bull-dosed until it cannot think, or only thinks it thinks—thinks it exists to send you to Parliament—to talk. It is the majority which to-day

in face of the war-colossus is without policy, powerless, talking . . .

DESPARD (*quietly*). Where is *your* policy?

JIM DURGAN (*triumphant*). I will tell ye. The sword of the General Strike.

BILL TUTTY (*drily*). A sword, gents, with two edges, that cuts both ways.

OLD BRESCHOFF. "He that draws the sword shall die by the sword." You cannot fight the sword with the sword.

JIM DURGAN. Talk, talk, only talk. I said the sword of the General Strike with the blunted edge of passive resistance. If they want the edge sharpened, they shall have it. War against War.

FITZ (*mimicking*). "Talk, talk, only talk."

JIM DURGAN. No, not talk—action. The day the diplomats declare war—we declare the International General Strike. Gutenmann will give the word in Germany, Vallon here, in France, Masta in Italy—and on the word every workman throws down his tools. The engine driver walks down from his engine, the conductor from his tram ; the servant girl flings down the egg she is boiling, and, with the help of God, the soldier his rifle. No wheel turns in the munition factory. No wheel in the streets. No wheel on the iron ways. The labourer throws down his spade . . .

FITZ. And the gravedigger also I suppose ?

JIM DURGAN. "Let the dead bury their dead." (*He resumes his seat.*)

DESPARD (*rising to speak*). I have been associated with my friend, Jim Durgan, for many years on peace

platforms, despite the fact that he stands for strike action and force alone, I, for political action, but I confess that, pacifist and hater of war though I am, I have never felt so unsure of my ground as during the war-threat of the last few weeks and, if he will forgive me for saying it, after hearing the speech to which we have just listened. Frankness is the price of International understanding, and I say now in the face of my friend Gutenmann that the events of the last few days have caused the blood of some of us to stir—to stir to something that I cannot define—perhaps to the call of the blood itself. It is a phenomenon not easy to describe—it is more of a tingling than a thing of consciousness. It may be a sort of primeval stirring—it may be barbarous and uncivilised—it may be the highest form of virtue—but it is there. It cannot be explained away—not even by Jim Durgan. It is the call of country. (*There is an uneasy stirring amongst his auditors.*)

It is this which makes me more than ever doubt my friend Durgan's policy—not the policy, but its practice. I at least am certain that my own class, the middle class, will fight when it comes to the call—no one doubts that . . . but I am equally sure that the working class will follow. There are instincts that are deeper than anything else—deeper than death—and of these the strongest is the instinct of country that men call patriotism.

Salandra (*interrupting passionately*). Internationalism !

Despard. Internationalism is still only a word.

It is not even a habit. It is something from the outside that has never been translated into consciousness, that has come down as a revelation to the workers, and, like most revelations, is not believed. It is like the Social-Democratic gospel of Marx and some others—everyone talks about it; nobody knows anything about it; scarcely anybody acts upon it. In a sense, nobody believes in its existence any more than they believe in the existence of that other International of which Jim Durgan has spoken, the International that is its natural enemy, the Yellow International of the Financiers, of Gold, but one that has a terrible consciousness—that knows its ways and its ends which it follows with the persistence that is consciousness's own, and of which the members, as is so often said of the Red International of Labour, are men of no-country. The workman, the British workman at least, thinks through his Trade Union when he thinks economically, as he nearly always does think; through the middle class for his ideas; but when it comes to the Call—he thinks only one way, neither through his Union or his class—only through the nation—nationally. Doing what you're told is a habit the British workman has learned through the centuries—war will not help him to forget it. And do you believe that when war comes English Trades Unionists will leave their country in the lurch . . .

Fitz. Not unless they're sure the Germans will do the same by theirs.

Gutenmann. The Germans vil fight.

Jim Durgan. Where are your old convictions!

DESPARD. I know it seems like going against every conviction I have ever held—it is as though something stronger than myself were urging me to it—but when the trumpet blares and the drum taps the workers will follow the call as they have always followed it, and the middle class—well I know my class . . .

BILL TUTTY. And I know mine . . .

DESPARD. . . . They'll be in the van. No man of my class is sufficiently, what my friend Vallon might call, *déclassé*, and no workman is sufficiently class-conscious to refuse. Our Internationalism is but the mushroom growth of half a century—Nationalism the growth of the ages.

JIM DURGAN (*bitterly*). Why not call yourself a patriot at once ?

DESPARD. Because I am a pacifist—if you like, a patriot-pacifist. I have not turned my coat—I will not turn it.

SALANDRA (*eagerly*). Bravo—bravo !

DESPARD. If England declares war—if Germany declares it—I will go on the platform and fight it to the last draw of my breath. I will tell the workers not to fight—and I will wait for the German, the French, and the other democracies to reciprocate—for the tocsin of War against War . . . even though, as I say it, I believe I shall be as a voice crying in the wilderness . . .

OLD BRESCHOFF. . . . To prepare the way of the Lord . . .

DESPARD. To try . . . and perhaps, to fail. (*He resumes his seat.*)

Bill Tutty. Let's have a little bit from the other side. Is there nothing 'ere Mr Chairman but bloomin' pacifics ?—no what we call red-blooded Henglishmen from the Mile End Road of the nime of Moses ? Don't all speak at once.

Fitz. Won't the red-blooded Englishman from Mile End who has just spoken do what is necessary ?

John Bluett (*portentously*). A very good idea of Mr Fitz, a very good idea indeed. Now, Mr Tutty, we're waiting to hear from you.

Bill Tutty (*with mock shyness*). Well gents, as you *are* so pressing. This 'ere little gathering reminds me of a Friendly Lead down at " The Three Bottles "—everybody wants to be as nice as possible and not drink out of the other fellow's glass—unless it comes to a free fight and he's not looking—a sort of Concert of Europe as you might sye. I don't know as 'ow I come prepared with a speech, bein' 'andier wiv the maulers than wiv the tongue—more of a biter than a barker—one of the bulldog breed as you might sye, but 'ere goes. . . . Mr Despard says 'e knows his clawss. Well I'm a docker—the Dockers' Union sent me 'ere to-day—and I know mine. My clawss is third-clawss in the national special. The haristocracy in the first-clawss sit tight behind their *Times* and say nuffink—they don't spit and they don't cuss unduly, but you always know what they'll do when the Concert of Europe begins to play—they'll fight and fight like billy-oh for their clawss—that's first and the rest nowhere—they fight for what they 'ave, and to give the devil his due, they fight sometimes for

what they have not. Sometimes even they fight for *h*onour, or for fun.

Now the gents in the second-clawss, they sit behind the *Dily Mile* at a halfpenny a time—they don't spit either because the gents in the fust don't and it isn't gentlemanly ; and when the band begins to play they'll fight, not for what they 'ave, for they 'aven't much, but for what they hope to get and because it's gentlemanly.

The third-clawss gents—my little lot—they spit and they cuss like one o'clock behind *Sporting Chips* or the *Dead 'Un* because they've been taught, poor beggars, to believe that the gents in the fust-clawss do the sime and because the only thing in life they love better than dear old democracy is a lord—or his imitation. Of course when they spit they spout democracy and damnation and brotherly love and they cuss in a strictly Christian sperit—but when the band opens up the gents of the third will follow their lords and masters " into the mouth of hell, into the jawers of death," etcetera, etcetera, for death, glory, and the dear old flag. I know my clawss. Blimey ! hexcuse the langwidge gents and lidies all, if they're not like a lot of monkeys—but not so rambuskous. Jim Durgan says they follow their tails—well so they do, they allus 'ave followed them and some fink they allus will—but some dye . . .

Salandra (*trying to follow*). What does he say about donkeys ?

Bill Tutty. *You've* said it. The democracy is a hanimile with a pair of long ears that hears heveryfink ; a froat that is allus braying ; and a pair of heels which

it uses at the wrong times and against the wrong people—often against another donkey. But give it a carrot, and gor blimey ! if it won't follow its master to the end of the world and over the edge. I know my clawss and I know my ass.

Jim Durgan. But Bill, it was your own Union that said at the Square meeting on Sunday that it would down tools if it came to war—that they wouldn't load a ship—and that they'd let the ships rot their guts out before they'd take a grain out of them.

Bill Tutty. O' course they said it ; and they'd say it now if you got enough of them together to sye it. That's the voice of the majority—but it's the voice of the minority that matters—the voice of the minority of one—of the hindividual—and when he 'ears the tap o' the drum, and catches the flutter of the flag, neither Trafalgar Square, the Dockers' Union, nor the devil himself will be able to hold him back from the firing line. I know my clawss. The soul of the crowd is not the soul of the man—it's another sort of soul. It's the soul of the moment—it's the other kind that sticks it out. It's the soul that fills its belly on speeches and the wind of speeches—it grows wiv the fing on which it feeds.

Salandra. Oh, but this man is mad !

Bill Tutty. Not so mad ma'am as you might think, all things considering. You tike a crahd that 'appens casual like at a street corner—that's a blighted 'ard thing to persuade, as you'll know if you've ever stood on a soap-box on Mile End Waste, trying to convert the 'orny 'anded sons of toil—for why—'cos it's

made up of hindividuals each one of 'oom is as good as the next and a darned sight better (hexcuse the langwidge). But get the same little lot and a lot of other same little lots into the Mile End Town Hall, give 'em the sitting member and a little bit of the Marseillaise—not too much—and you've got 'em going—but when you shove that little lot and a couple of hundred other little lots and march 'em to Trafalgar Square with the band playing " Boys of the Bulldog Breed " or " The Red Flag," according as to whether you're the Workers' Party or the Don't Workers—marshal 'em under the lions—fire at 'em some shrapnel about tyrants and landowners and hexploiters—especially the hexploiters—and strike me pink ! if they wouldn't face hanyfink, even Nelson's bloomin' lions themselves if they came to life . . . allus so long as they're together and there's enough of 'em . . . for then you're not 'andlin' *some* hindividuals but a crahd—and you're not 'andlin' a crahd but a wild beast that is as ready to tear the man on the platform as the next. Oh it's a beautiful thing is the crahd—always 'ungry, always yelping, and never satisfied. It'll vote for hanyfink will the crahd —for Protection or Free Trade—for the Union or devolution—for death, destruction and damnation. It's a roaring lion is the crahd—and a little biby. It likes sweet things does the crahd and lollipops and Spanish liquorice. It likes the truf', the whole truf', and nothing but the truf', so 'elp your Gawd, does the crahd, if the truf' is what the man on the platform thinks and what the people below think they think . . .

FITZ. Sometimes he doesn't.

BILL TUTTY. Gawd bless your innercent little soul, Mr Fitz, the crahd don't trouble for that. The crahd don't want thought, it wants tripe—it wants the flashy word and the little bit of sugar and a taste of the whip—the crahd likes the whip when it isn't laid on too 'ard—it tickles its sense of humour.

. . . But—don't you forget it—it's the crahd that's goin' to decide the war that is comin'. It is the crahd that'll take a 'ole in its belt and bite its whitened lips and say nuffin'—it's the crahd that, by Gawd! will foot the bill and pay the price. For the crahd has its 'eights and its depths—its 'eavens and its 'ells—the crahd is the soul of the nation—and whether it is to be national salvation or national damnation, it's the crahd that'll do it and be it. (*He sits down.*)

FITZ. This man talks like a book—perhaps *the* Book. I'm not sure that, like myself, he's not inspired.

JOHN BLUETT. I am afraid we are getting away from the object of this meeting. I am bound to point out that what we are here for is to decide what we shall do in the event of war and not to get away from practical politics.

FITZ (*sarcastically*). The same thing of course.

JOHN BLUETT (*quite unmoved*). What our friend Tutty has said is all very interesting, though I am bound to protest against his idea of the crowd, which to some of us who are practical politicians and men of affairs is something more than a—a—a sort of rowdy animal without any idea of a vote. . . .

SALANDRA (*generally to the circumambient*). What did I tell you! Zees man is mad. Zees man has votes on ze brain.

JOHN BLUETT. I hope I have. Is it not the vote that has placed England where she is . . .

FITZ. Where is that?

JOHN BLUETT (*feebly*). Where is that? Why of course—of course—(*hesitates a bit and plunges*) of course ahead of every other nation—the home of liberty and free speech—the home of the Bible—the home that all other nations look to as a 'ome from 'ome (*completely forgetting himself*) . . . everyone knows that the Union Jack . . . (*remembering himself in time*) but of course this is an International gathering . . .

FITZ. . . . In which, unfortunately, foreigners are present . . .

SALANDRA (*erupting to her feet*). Oh! but you are all mad—*you* (*pointing to the Chairman*) are mad—and (*pointing to* DESPARD) *you*—poor boy—and especially (*pointing to* TUTTY) *you*. There is only one here of sense and that is Monsieur Durgan . . .

FITZ (*plaintive*). Where do I come in?

SALANDRA (*concisely ignoring*). You *don't*. As for you (*pointing again at* BILL TUTTY) you ar-r-e a tr-r-r-aitor Bill Tutty—you are either a fool or a knave—you are a fool if you really think what you have said about your class, and you are a knave if you don't. There is what you Eengleesh call ze horns of ze dilem-ma—sit on ze one you like ze best. I, Salandra (*proudly*), an aristocrat, know your class. I have

known it where you will never know it—in ze street fight—have known it in ze great strikes in Parma—in Milan—in Paris . . .

Bill Tutty (*under his breath, much downcast*). Bloomin' furriners.

Salandra. I—I, Salandra, have seen them in the Parma strike lie down before the engine of the war-train so that they could not drag their class off to the war shambles. I have seen them in Milan tear the very stones from the streets with their naked hands to slay their enemies . . .

Fitz. Pity the Italian policeman.

Salandra (*hissing*). . . . yes, tear them up with the naked hands to slay their enemies . . .

Fitz. . . . who come from themselves.

Salandra. . . . I have seen them fasten their teeth in the throats of their tyrants. . . .

Bill Tutty. Canningballs.

Salandra. And I, not of their class, I, Salandra, made my great speech at Milan looking down the barrels of sixteen loaded guns.

Fitz (*flippant*). Did you see anything, Comtesse ?

Salandra (*with splendid dignity*). I saw the cartridges that filled them—and they were not blank cartridges.

Bill Tutty (*aside*). She must have damned good sight.

Salandra (*unquenchable and really beginning to get hold of her audience*). I, I have seen the people, pale with hunger—the men with tightened belts—the women with starved breasts at which their weeping

little ones vainly suckled—in the General Strike of my own country of France—with never a whimper—a cry. *Those* are the people—not the animals of Monsieur Tutty who no more have existence than has the phœnix —not the jingo wage-slaves of Mr Despard—who indeed is mad but charming—not the psalm-singing voters of the Shairman—*those* are the people. I speak of that which I know. I speak of the gallant syndicalists and anarchists of France and Italy who, when the word is given—"To arms!" will rise in their hundr-r-eds of thousands—hundr-r-eds of thousands—will rally to the flag of the people—the Red Flag, will cut the throats of their tyrants out of hand . . . (*pauses breathless*).

BILL TUTTY. And they tork abaht the softer sex . . .

SALANDRA. . . . and will set brand and dynamite to the palaces of their oppressors, turn their rifles against their officers, and if needs be, not spare their own flesh and blood.

FITZ. Because they are pacifists I suppose?

SALANDRA. Because—they . . . are . . . pacifists —because they hate bloodshed, because they love their fellow-men.

FITZ. A nice sort of brotherly love. I wonder what they do when they hate people.

SALANDRA (*looking at* BLUETT). And woe to those who in that day seek to keep them from their natural, their lawful, prey. He who is not with us is against us—no man can serve two masters . . . (*Turning with open arms to* TUTTY) And you—your brave men

from the East End—I have seen them, the legions of hunger, of death—I have spoken to them—they are dirty, downtrodden, ill-treated—they have cheered me—me—Salandra. When that day dawns and they hear the cry of freedom, they too will rise in their thousands against their oppressors and tear their mansions stone from stone—they have promised me, Salandra, to do it. . . .

Bill Tutty. That was a Tower Hill promise—the Tower Hill Turnouts—the boys of the unemployed—two glasses of beer and I'd push a Duke over—oh (*with deep contempt*) I know 'em. I know my class.

Salandra. Calumniator! Tr-r-raitor! Have I not seen them—gaunt, haggard, desperate—only lacking leaders . . .

Bill Tutty. Only lacking a couple of slops to go through the lot.

Salandra. I do not know your slops—I do not wish to know them—I speak of what I know—and I say that these men, wretched wage-slaves, hirelings, animals of the market place, are revolutionists. When I, Salandra, waved the Red Flag before them they shouted with joy . . .

Bill Tutty. I know them shouts. You could have done the same with a Union Jack.

Salandra. . . . with joy I say at the thought of the approaching day of retribution . . .

Bill Tutty. . . . of beer, baccy, and free drinks all round.

Salandra. And it is to these men, these boys of the bouldogue breed . . .

Bill Tutty. . . . All teeth and no bite.

Salandra. . . . we shall in that day make our appeal. We shall fling wide to the winds the crimson banner of freedom as it will be flung to the millions of the Fatherland—to the olive sons of the Latin countries —the workers of the whole wor-r-ld shall hear the cry " To arms ! " as they heard it in the French Revolution and (*turning to the banner behind her*) they shall echo the words of Marx : " Workers of the World— Unite ! You have a Wor-r-ld to win. You have only your Chains to lose ! " (*Her speech is succeeded by a dead silence.*)

Old Breschoff (*rising to his feet with difficulty, his voice quavering, and greeted with an undertone of sympathy and respect*). I have seen more revolutions than the Countess Salandra has winters—I have with the other children of misfortune passed along the Great White Way that leads to Siberia—I have seen strong men die by my side choked in their own life-blood—I have heard the rifle-rattle blend with the rattle of death—and I, Old Breschoff, once known as the Grandfather of the Revolution, tell you that blood never yet staunched blood, hate killed hate, or force, force. The salve of Internationalism alone can staunch the blood-flow, love destroy hate, and non-resistance annul force. The doctrine of non-resistance to evil taught by the Master and afterwards by our own beloved Tolstoy, is the only doctrine that can dissolve war from the world . . .

Vallon (*interrupting*). . . . But it cannot solve the problem of defence of country. *That* is the real

problem. Surely even you, pacifist-anarchist that you are, would not see your country overrun by a brutal enemy—you would not prevent the workers of the world from taking part in a war of pure defence.

BRESCHOFF. No man in these days of secret, hood-blind diplomacy can say what *is* a defensive war. No man can say where defence ends and offence begins. No man can even say, least of all the man-in-the-street, who is the offender. Wars are not fought inside frontiers, but beyond them. No, non-resistance is the only resistance possible—the only policy.

SALANDRA (*fiercely*). And let *our* masters tread us under the iron hoof of capital; misuse our womanhood; blight our souls for money.

OLD BRESCHOFF. And you—what would you have? Would you have a holocaust in our streets? Would you have demon passions unchained which cannot again be leashed? Would you copy our masters by bloody slaughter? Would you have those masses who are only now finding, however blindly, their way to freedom, now nosing for the light, thrust back by superior force into the chasm of shameful forgetfulness?—have the sun of the rising democracy blotted out by the dark clouds of reaction as (*he points through the windows*) the blue sky outside is dulling under the thunderclouds that are rolling up. (*As he speaks the room gradually darkens.*) Would you place the very weapon which is to slay you into the hands of your slaughterers—the weapon of force? . . .

But it will not be necessary. War to-day is impossible. Human nature is no longer beastly. The

modern man is too nervous, too highly strung, too civilised, to kill his fellows in the millions of a European war. Most of our fellow-beings could not kill a sheep —much less a man.

VALLON. Man-killing is the easier—I've tried both.

BRESCHOFF. I tell you war is impossible—we are too civilised—and there is the new spirit in the world. We shall not hear again the thunder of the guns. (*As he speaks, there comes a peal of thunder, the room being illuminated by a lightning flash.*)

VALLON (*in the silence that follows*). There you have your answer.

FITZ (*after a few moments*). What about the Balkan War ?

OLD BRESCHOFF (*vaguely*). Oh that—that was different. They are a different sort of people—those Central Europeans.

FITZ. It is always different.

JIM DURGAN. We do not talk of slaughter ; we talk of the strike ; the weapon of the strike ; the weapon of passive resistance against tyrant government.

OLD BRESCHOFF. And is that not only words ? How long would the resistance remain passive ? I hate government, whether tyrant despotism or benevolent autocracy, as much as my friend Mr Durgan or the Countess Salandra—I hate it on principle—I confess myself proudly, not a Syndicalist, not a Direct Actionist, but a peaceful Anarchist—as Tolstoy my teacher was a peaceful Anarchist ; yet I say to you, as head of the International Union of Peace, that if the

lifting of one sword or the killing of one soldier could bring peace to Europe, I would not lift it or have him killed. I, like you, believe that men will never be free until they have ridded themselves of politics and its corollary, government—until each man has learned to control himself he cannot control others, and when he has learned self-control he will not seek to control his fellows—for that is the final lesson in control.

SALANDRA. But the General Strike has nothing to do with government. It is the weapon of resistance to government.

OLD BRESCHOFF. It is a weapon—you have used the word yourself. It is but to substitute a Strike Caucus for that of Parliament—to substitute one form of government for another. It is an appeal to force to control and compel the masses of the workers to your will and to enforce that will upon Society. It is an appeal to force, to hate, to elemental passion. It is not an appeal to reason. It is impracticable; and if it were practicable it is not possible; and if possible, unthinkable.

JIM DURGAN (*harshly*). Where is your policy?

OLD BRESCHOFF. My policy, the policy of the Peace Union, is one of the oldest of policies—the policy of "Love your enemies." No casuistry either of priest or soldier or diplomat can overlay the plain command from the Man they all profess to follow. They can and they have the right to refuse to follow him, but so long as they follow him the command is clear: "Do good to them that hate you; love them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

JIM DURGAN. But that is not a policy—that is an ethic. How will you apply it ?

OLD BRESCHOFF. Refuse to kill. That is how we will apply it. When they ask, as they will ask, the question which in the Christian Europe of to-day is the question insistent, supreme : " Can you kill ? " we reply : " We can, but we will not." That is our policy.

SALANDRA. And you will have our young men slaughtered for the refusal. You will have them turned over to ze conscript-courtmartials and beaten. You will have them shot in cold blood without ze chance of a reply. Piah ! The policy of a coward. The General Strike at least puts weapons into their hands — zey cannot be slaughtered like defenceless sheep. Would you have them crucified ?

OLD BRESCHOFF. Yes, I would. The Christ that is coming to save the world will be a Christ in corduroy —and not the Man with the Red Flag on a barricade. He will hang, he must hang, on his cross, crowned with the thorns of his beliefs. He will hang, and be mocked, and die—but his death will not be in vain. He will die for a world—for a world freed from war and from the soldier. (*He collapses into his seat, leaning back whilst his wife ministers to him, but with a brave effort comes to, whilst the others sit silent.*)

VALLON (*who has listened to* SALANDRA *under protest and to* BRESCHOFF *with ever-increasing impatience*). Oh, but I must and vill speak, Monsieur le Chairman. The voice of our comrade, Madame Salandra, is the voice of ze streets—of revolution without restraint

—of Direct Action without thought. It is ze voice of ze Head under ze Red Cap, of Syndicalism, of Anarchy which, like Socialism, speaks with many voices as we have heard through our old friend Breschoff, whom to differ with is but to love, but whose voice is also ze Anarchist voice. It is the voice of ze child. It is not the voice of France, the r-r-eal France—the France, Monsieur le Chairman, of which your people know so little—the France that r-reflects; the France that holds; the France that never forgets. Salandra no more speaks for France than Paris speaks for her—she no more speaks for her than ze Syndicalist speaks for her because his mouth is loud and his tongue brazen. My France, Monsieur le Chairman and comrades all (*he draws himself up proudly*) is not the France of ze Republic, not the France of ze Napoleon, not even the France of ze Revolution . . . my France is the France of the Idea, the France eternal. It is the France which has given a message to the world—an IDEA—the Idea of Revolution. The idea has come clothed in many forms, forms changing with the age and time—but an idea always the same—the breaking, seeking idea—the idea of discontent, of the discontent that is divine, for it breaks the way through travail and tribulation towards ze light. France, *ma belle France*, is the midwife of the new Society.

And it is because France is the country of the Idea, has never been untrue to the faith that is in her—because ze Frenchman is ze true Revolutionist, whose revolution and therefore whose Internationalism is as unconscious, as intangible, as the breath of his life,

that I believe it is he who will stand out before Europe, the pioneer, as he has always been the pioneer, of the Idea—in this case the Idea of disarmament. He, the fighter, will show the nations how not to fight—he, the flower of the brave, will show the nations how to take the brand of coward on his forehead for the sake of the Idea. He can suffer as well as fight.

But this idea will have to be preceded by another—France will give the first national party to the world which vill refuse to vote its country's war credits (*he pauses significantly*) . . . *if* our German comrades vill give their solemn undertaking to refuse to vote the German credits in the Reichstag . . . (*he looks down at* GUTENMANN *by his side, who sits stolidly immovable*).

SALANDRA. You cannot fight war by politics—you must meet force by force ! The French workman will fight against his masters on the barricade, under the old flag, as he did in the Revolution.

VALLON (*with exquisite gentleness and courtesy*). Ah Madame ! if there is to be fighting in France, then God help the Syndicalists—they vill be ze first to fall at the hands of their fellows. If ze political party of ze workers cannot save France and (*he looks questioningly at* GUTENMANN) if ze party of ze German workers do not help us—if there is to be fighting in France, it will be not class against class, but citizen against citizen. If there be a General Strike it vill be ze armed strike of ze patriot majority against the Syndicalist minority. . . . But there vill be no strike and there vill be no fight. There vill be ze passive resistance of ze war credits . . . if our German comrades do the same . . .

(*once more he looks down at* GUTENMANN) . . . and the Idea. The lessons of half a century will triumph over jingoism . . .

FITZ. And patriotism ? . . .

VALLON. Yes, and over what the world calls patriotism — the jingo-patriotism of *revanche* and *quand même.*

GUTENMANN (*heavily*). If *ve* do not move in de Reichstag, and if *dey* see de chance to get back Alsace-Lorraine ?

VALLON (*blenching a little*). That is another matter . . .

FITZ. It is always another matter.

VALLON. Alsace stands outside all else. Then . . . perhaps . . . then . . . then (*drawing himself up and peering blindly through his shaded spectacles*) . . . then we shall fight—Social Democrat and Conservative, Republican and Monarchist, side by side, proud to die for France. (*He turns for the last time and looks sadly, proudly, at* GUTENMANN, *who still sits unmoved, crouched over his papers.*)

JOHN BLUETT. I think we have got very far from practical politics—one would almost imagine that practical politics and sanity had nothing to do with war and that the moment the question of country came in at the window, sanity fled at the door. Instead of deciding what steps we shall take to meet the war-threat, we are talking about killing and country. Gentlemen—I mean ladies and gentlemen—I ask you as a practical politician standing for a responsible and practical party—is this sanity ? Where are your facts ?

GUTENMANN (*rising heavily to his feet*). You vant facts, Herr Shairman. Here is von—de fact of de Sherman Empire. Dat and de British Empire are de two biggest facts in de vorld. And vot is dis fact? It is de fact of a nation in arms—of sevendy millions of peoples—every male of which is, at the vord, as our Bismarck said: "ready from a boot button to a big gun;" ready for vot?—for killing. Our comrade Salandra de army of a peautiful tream from her imagination has drawn—de army of de General Strike, vith General Strike in command—dat is, General Anarchy, referred to by our old friend Breschoff, who also lives in a peautiful tream. But I vil tell you de facts as opposed to de treams. Behind dose sevendy millions dere stands von vill, von voice—de voice neither of Kaiser nor Junker—but de voice of Shermany—de voice of de Sherman discipline—de brazen voice and de mailed fist—von voice dat svings de whole—de voice, de instinct, of country. A voice, if you vill, clanked into de Sherman mind from de cradle to de grave, but yet, de voice of Vaterland.

And do you know vot Vaterland means? It means iron obedience; automatic will; de worship of gods; killing vidout conscience; war vidout mercy. It means de Sherman God—de God of Battles—de Sherman Michael; de Sherman Superman. It means doing vidout thought; action vidout responsibility. It means de click of de heel; de hand to de helm; de sword by de side in de vast Toyland dat is Shermany. It means, if General Strike comes, dat von half of my

countrymen will shoot down de udder half before dey go out to lay de vorld in ashes.

JIM DURGAN. But what about the millions of Social Democrats ? What will they say ?

GUTENMANN. Vot will dey say ? Dey vill have no say. Dey are vot you call dummies—vid de dummy teat of de vote to keep dem quiet. Dey are voting machines vidout power.

SALANDRA. What did I zay !

GUTENMANN. I am a political—I do not believe in de Sheneral Strike—but I say to you—dey are leetle leetle babies vid de blaything of de vote—de Sherman toy. De Reichstag—de Reichstag is a talking shop—de House of Vords. De Chancellor, who represents His All Highest, de Kaiser, holds de Reichstag in de hollow of his hand.

JIM DURGAN. But the Social Democrats—the masses—will they fight ?

(*As he speaks, the sound of a military band, coming out of the distance, which has petered through once or twice during* GUTENMANN'S *remarks, now increases as it comes up, the speaker pausing to listen with the others. It is playing "The British Grenadiers," which, as the band passes the hall, bursts into "Rule Britannia," the crash of drum and brass being drowned by the rolling cheers of the crowd.*)

GUTENMANN (*holding up his hand*). Vill dey fight ? Ask dose, outside, if *dey* vill. . . . Dey vill not ask demselves dat or any udder question when de Day comes. De Social Democrat vill hear only de clang

of de trumpet—de voice of de drill sergeant—and de crash of de Krupp. Big Bertha vill call—and dey vill follow as de little children followed de Pied Piper of Hamelin. Dey vill not dance, but down de road dat leads to death as von man vill dey march—neither vid smile nor frown—only to de vord of de drill sergeant. It is de Social Democrats who vill hold Shermany behind a vall of blood and iron—it is de vorkers who by dere millions vidout complaint or equivocation vill die.

VALLON (*in hopeful eagerness*). But if they do, they vill do it only in defence of ze country—against invasion. They vill greet their French brothers across ze frontier and zay: ve too vill only fight inside our frontiers. . . .

GUTENMANN. Dis war, if it comes, vill have no frontiers, no beginning, and perhaps no ending. As our comrade Breschoff has said: "No man can say vot is a defensive war." You strike your enemy not in your own country but in *his*. England's frontiers are not England, but de ramparts of de vorld—her battlefield neither Kent nor Sussex, Scotland nor Ireland, but de Seven Seas and de Five Continents . . . nay—her blace of battle vill not be earth-bound but vill fly airward and root hellward under de blackened earth and de green waters. De war of de future vill be invisible and universal—it may be even dat if dis war is loosed, it may unchain an Age of War and vith it de War State—an age in vich each gountry vill be a fort, hermetically sealed against every udder gountry—air-tight, vater-tight, land-tight, man-tight,

vid every man, voman, and child of its inhabitants organised for war and for war alone—an age in vich de supply base of de army vill be de whole gountry behind it, in vich de very babes in de munition factory vill vork. It may be, as Breschoff has said, an Age of Nerves—but it vill also be an Age of Nerve, in which men strung to a savagery of civilisation vill show demselves high-tensioned to brutality and to suffering. Men vill never be too nervous to kill in dat Nervous Age. . . . (*He pauses.*) And dis is not de last great war.

And how shall de Social Democracy prevent it? For behind de nation dere stands de army and behind de army de politician and behind de politician de diplomat . . . and behind de diplomat de devil—dat is to say de Financier—de man referred to by Herr Durgan, whose hidden golden hand svings de whole. How shall we prevent it I say? (*He waits a moment in dead silence.*) Vere is our policy. Has de Internationale a policy, or, like dis meeting to-day, can it only talk? Dere is de White Man's Burden—have ve any policy about dat? Dere are armaments—have ve any policy about dat? Dere is war—have ve any policy about *dat*? Ve talk about "War against War"—vat do ve mean by it? Ve talk about de United States of Europe as we talk about de spear and de pruning hook and de sword and de ploughshare—vot do ve mean by it? *Do* ve ever mean? (*He pauses a moment and goes on.*) . . . Ve—zpeag—about—de—Democracy (*this he says very slowly*) . . .

It is de Democrats who vill hurl Democracy into de dust and trample it under de iron heel of de mob. Dose, Mr Chairman, are de facts. (*He sits down heavily amidst tense silence.*)

JOHN BLUETT (*after a few moments' interval, during which they all sit, spell-bound*). Then there is nothing more for us to do here. If those are the facts, God help the International!

FITZ. He won't. He's a national, not an International God—still the God of Battles.

SALANDRA. Ze Internationale will help itself. . . .

DESPARD. But what do we propose *doing*?

JIM DURGAN. The barricade and the General Strike.

BILL TUTTY. Oh, you're balmy. Now the band'll begin to play!

VALLON. My poor France! My poor France!

BRESCHOFF. And so this is the end . . . the end . . . (*he goes out dazed*).

FITZ. No, it's the beginning.

(*The meeting breaks up, as though under a heavy load and feeling of helplessness, leaving* DESPARD *behind, obviously miserably depressed. He walks up and down once or twice and finishes by standing before the red banner, at which he stares. As he does so, the door opens and his fiancée enters, but not swingingly as before, closing the door softly, almost secretively, behind her. She seems in a suppressed fury.*)

DAWN. So you've closed the debating society!

DESPARD (*wearily*). Yes, it's all over.

DAWN. You talked of course.

DESPARD. Oh, yes, we talked. (*In weary remembrance*) Good Lord! how we did talk.

DAWN. Well, what are you going to *do*?

DESPARD (*looking at her vaguely*). "Do"—oh *do*!

DAWN (*impatiently*). Do—yes *do*. *Doing's* the thing that matters—not talking.

DESPARD (*still more dejected*). We did not decide to do anything—International Congresses never decide. We only talked.

DAWN. And Jim Durgan—was he one of the talkers?

DESPARD. No, Jim is a man of action. He wanted us to *do*. He asked for the barricade and the General Strike. But that means hell. Jim never was a practical politician—he was always the dreamer.

DAWN. "Practical politicians"—like your Bluetts I suppose! Of course he's a dreamer—a beautiful dreamer. It's the dreamers that have pioneered the world.

DESPARD (*staring at her*). Why Dawn, you speak as though *you* were the pacifist—and I the patriot. Since when have you been the champion of Jim Durgan? and of Jim Durgan's Internationalism?

DAWN. Can I not hate Jim Durgan's politics and admire the man? Is it not possible to distinguish between a man and his ideas?

DESPARD (*smiling*). Anyone would think you were his sweetheart, you speak so enthusiastically. Oh Dawn, but you are a real woman.

DAWN. What would you have me be—a man?

DESPARD (*tenderly*). No, Dawn, I would always have you yourself—the little woman I love—the woman who holds all the world for me. That is why I have never forced my pacifism and Internationalism upon you, though they are the breath of my life. You are patriot—I Internationalist. Your country is England—mine the world . . . and yet we both love England in our own way.

DAWN (*proudly*). I love England too, but I—I don't forget also that I'm an Irishwoman.

DESPARD (*chaffingly*). Then you are the very quintessence of nationalism. Perhaps even a truer patriot is the local patriot who regards his town as the only place under the sun worthy of consideration, and the truest the egotist. (*More seriously*) Can you not see that what people call patriotism and nationalism are only questions of degree? To one man himself, to another his town, to a third his county, to a fourth his country—and to me—the world. (*Laughing*) Perhaps one day we shall have inter-planetary patriots.

DAWN (*irritated*). That is only playing with the question as Mr Fitz might play with it. I tell you there *is* nationality—there *is* country. Nationality is the thing that goes deepest in the world to-day as the beginning of this war is showing. My country is more to me than all else in the world—more to me even than you Dick. I felt it outside there as my father's old regiment marched by to entrain with band playing and colours flying. I felt I could die for those brave fellows and for England. There *is* country.

DESPARD (*gravely*). I know it. Even I, Internationalist. It is a deep, primeval, savage instinct. It is an instinct which civilisation must dissipate by broadening it into the bigger instinct of race, and finally of humanity. Humanity is the last lesson the human being learns.

DAWN. Humanity like charity begins at home. Do you think I would exchange what I felt down there, that love of country, for your wishy-washy Internationalism which can only talk!

DESPARD. Some day, it will act.

DAWN. *How* will it act?

DESPARD. God knows! Perhaps through Salandra's General Strike.

DAWN (*flaming angrily*). But your Salandra—your Salandra who has looked down more rifle barrels than any other woman in Europe—she's like the rest, only a talker.

DESPARD (*irritated*). You are wrong there. Salandra is genuine as she is fearless. She at least has the courage of her convictions.

DAWN (*with rising anger*). Convictions! What are her convictions? Anarchy and Free Love.

DESPARD. Salandra may not have your ideas and mine, but she is a brave woman, and, after her lights, a good one.

DAWN. A good woman. How can you say such things! This woman, I tell you, believes in Free Love. Perhaps you too are free as she—perhaps you share her convictions!

DESPARD (*fiercely cold*). Listen, Dawn. You

shall not say those things, either now or at any other time.

DAWN. Shall I not ? I shall say what I choose, *now and* at any other time. This woman I tell you is an abandoned creature.

DESPARD. I thought we were speaking about pacifism and patriotism. Can no woman ever have a clear issue ? Must there always be the other woman ?

DAWN (*tensely*). But in this issue there *is* the other woman.

DESPARD. What do you mean, Dawn ?

DAWN. I will tell you what I mean. I mean what I have heard. Just before the end of the meeting I was standing outside reading the notices behind the door, when it opened and a man came out, his cap in his hand—a man with plastered hair—with him Jim Durgan ; and I heard him say something about " those cursed foreigners " and how he was afraid " that Sataness Salandra " had, what he called, " got her hooks " in him, whoever *him* was—and Jim, like the beautiful man he is, looked much troubled and said he feared as much, and added something which I could not quite catch about a kiss at that pacifist supper last night. Said he was not sure, but *he* was excited and had kissed her arm, whoever *he* was . . .

DESPARD (*half to himself*). Tutty . . . I was afraid of this.

DAWN. Then you *were* the *him*, and you *have* kissed Salandra.

DESPARD. Oh you don't understand Dawn ! I

was not unfaithful to you—not untrue—if I kissed her it was in comradely admiration. . . .

DAWN. Comradely admiration! You tell me you have kissed this woman of lightness, and you call it "comradely admiration!"

DESPARD. There were lights and wine and music and there was the aftermath of the great meeting—we had been congratulating her on her speech—and I am a Despard, like all Despards subject to impulse . . .

DAWN. Impulse!

DESPARD. And I kissed her hand . . .

DAWN. Her arm . . .

DESPARD. It may have been her arm . . .

DAWN. Or perhaps her lips . . .

DESPARD. Oh this is unbearable!

DAWN (*with a flash of brutality*). But you will have to bear it. (*Sneering*) You are a pacifist you know.

DESPARD (*unpacifically*). I am glad you came back to it. Yes, I am a pacifist, and I put my pacifism and Internationalism before anything else in the world. . . .

DAWN. Even before Salandra! Perhaps even before me!

DESPARD. Before anything that will stand between me and what I believe to be the truth.

DAWN. Then you will have to choose between this woman and me.

DESPARD. You mean between my convictions and you.

DAWN. If you like.

DESPARD. What if I don't like?

DAWN. Then you can take your Salandra, but you

are finished with me (*with a sudden outbreak of tenderness*) . . . oh Dick, boy ! can't you see where all this pacifism is leading you ? Can you not see the types, decadent, vicious, which this International atmosphere of no-country breeds ? Come out of it all. Now that the call to arms—the call of country—is about to sound, you will not shame me—it would break my heart if my man hung back—if you hung back, all would be over between you and me. . . . Give up this wretched movement of no-country. . . .

DESPARD (*chilled and becoming more obstinate*). What do you mean . . . what are you trying to do—to threaten or to buy me ?

DAWN (*hurt and angry*). What do *you* mean ? Do you mean to act the coward and traitor when your country calls ? You choose between your pacifism and your sweetheart.

DESPARD. Listen to me. Before you entered this room I was plunged into uncertainty—yes, about my pacifism. The meeting left me unsettled—shook all my convictions—made me think stupidly that the International would always talk—never decide—made me even for a moment hazy about Internationalism—regard it as a chimera—something conjured. I too heard the regiment and the music—heard if you will the call. Now I no longer have doubts. You, the patriot, have resolved them. When you give me the choice of selling my convictions—my free soul—for your favour—there is no choice open to me—I hold to what I believe—I hold to my Internationalism and to my humanity.

DAWN. And you lose me.

DESPARD. Yes—I—lose—you.

DAWN (*looking at him fixedly*). Is that your last word ?

DESPARD (*gravely*). Yes.

(DAWN *slowly takes her engagement ring off her finger, lays it silently on the table, and goes out, leaving* DESPARD *standing, head bowed, away from the audience, as the curtain slowly falls.*)

(*End of Act I.*)

ACT II

Characters

General Arran.	Lancelot Fitz.
His Wife.	Bill Tutty.
Dawn Arran.	The Bishop of Kensington.
Richard Despard.	Mr Lily.
Jim Durgan.	Professor Bastable.
The Countess Salandra.	The Maid.

(*Twelve months have elapsed.*)

The curtain goes up upon an apparently empty drawing-room, with a great leather easy chair, back to audience and a little to the right. The drawing-room is that of General Arran *at Buckingham Gate, London, it being about twelve months after the outbreak of the War. The balcony windows, at the back of the stage, are open and the autumn sun is shining into the room in the mellow glow of afternoon. The occasional cry of a paper-boy is heard from the street below, mingling with a purring sound which gradually develops into a snore, proceeding from the direction of the easy chair. The door opens suddenly, almost savagely, and* Mrs Arran *enters the room in dolman, hussar hat, and umbrella held like a sword—altogether in full war-paint.*

Mrs Arran, *or "The Widow Malone" as she is known in the Service, is the widow of a deceased Malone whom she is reported to have managed to death, and*

has terrorised General Arran *into marrying her. She is a tall, angular woman, active with the lorgnette, and with a stiff back as though a poker had been thrust down the spinal column, being imperial both in politics and person. The only thing she has so far been unable to manage is her stepdaughter and* General Arran's *only child,* Dawn.

Her husband is a soft-hearted, sentimental soldier, Anglo-Irish, and speaks with a touch of the brogue. Like many of his profession, he hates bloodshed, but, as he says, "you must have someone to do the killing, you know." He has a purply good-natured face with indiscriminate moustache, and is inclined in the sere and dry of his retirement to be a dinner man.

Mrs Arran (*snorting to herself, believing the room empty*). A pretty business — a pretty business! (*Fumes up and down once or twice like a hen that has lost her chickens and then screams through the door*) Joseph! Joseph! (*Whilst she is doing this, a great red face rises rubicund from behind the back of the chair, in which the owner half kneels, and stares at her apprehensively. She calls again after a moment*) Joseph! Joseph!

General Arran. Here, dear.

Mrs Arran. Here! Where? Oh there you are —you're never there when you're wanted.

General Arran (*protestingly mild*). But I *was* here, my dear.

Mrs Arran (*the beads on her dolman flying loose, her hussar shako a little on one side*). Don't argue Joseph.

I'm in no mood for argument. I *hate* argument. Here's a pretty business with that girl of yours. . . .

General Arran (*mildly*). *Your* girl too, my dear.

Mrs Arran. Thank God! she's none of my flesh and blood, as I often told Malone about his family. She has a drop of the bad Irish in her—a rebellious minx. *Now* what do you think is her last aggravation?

General Arran. I'm sure I can't say.

Mrs Arran. "Can't say!" You can never say anything.

General Arran (*ruefully*). You don't give me much chance, my dear.

Mrs Arran. Ugh! I've no patience with the man. (*Striding around*) She's pitched on this afternoon when I had arranged *my* At-Home, for one of what she calls *her* Democratic At-Homes, and we shall be having some of that pacifist and labour rabble here, (*with rising intonation*) *here*, in this room, in half an hour—and this, oh my Heavens! with the Prime Minister looking in at my At-Home specially to meet Despard—and we may have the Bishop of Kensington and others (*clenches her hand towards the ceiling*)—and this is the only room in the flat available. Says she told me about it last week, that she doesn't mind at all if her friends *do* meet mine, and finally, as usual, defied me—me . . . because you encourage her, you, you man of putty. . . .

General Arran (*tactfully turning the conversation*). Perhaps the matter can be arranged, my dear.

Mrs Arran. Arranged!—Dawn was never arrangeable—who ever heard of arranging anything with her

—she is perfectly impossible—that strain of rebellion —that Irishness—more impossible than ever since she threw over her country, her class, and her convictions and became a violent—I'm sure I don't know why pacifists are always so violent—pacifist and started that ridiculous engagement with that dreadful man, that Durgan fellow. Not that I cared much for Despard—but at least he was a gentleman and now that he has come to his senses through the war and become a patriot there is not so much against him.

General Arran. But, my dear . . .

Mrs Arran. Now listen to me, Joseph! Don't argue. This matter has got to be settled one way or the other—and it's going to be settled *my* way. You must come down either on my side or on hers. If her people come in, I walk out.

General Arran (*twinkling hopefully*). Would you?

Mrs Arran. This is a test question. You decide between Dawn and me—between law and order and revolution—between the Prime Minister and this Durgan blackguard. . . .

Dawn (*suddenly coming into the room through the half-open door, coldly, looking into her stepmother's eyes*). What is that about "this Durgan blackguard?"

General Arran. Nothing, nothing dear. A mistake, quite a mistake.

Mrs Arran (*facing round*). No mistake. I told your father that he must decide between this labour and pacifist rabble of yours this afternoon and the Prime Minister of England. A pretty choice to have to make.

DAWN. We will come back later to "the Durgan blackguard." In the meantime, the room is mine, according to our usual arrangement that I am to have it for my At-Homes when I like, upon a week's notice —and I told you last week.

MRS ARRAN. And I told you I didn't remember.

DAWN. Didn't you ? That is unfortunate.

GENERAL ARRAN. Can't you take them into the dining-room, my dear ?

DAWN. What ! Take them into a room full of whitewashers and paperhangers. You can take your Prime Minister in there if you like. This room is mine from half-past four and I mean to have it.

GENERAL ARRAN. But my dear ! the Prime Minister ! think . . .

DAWN. No father ! I would do anything for you, but this is beyond you. This is a matter of principle.

MRS ARRAN (*sneering*). Principles and pacifists !

DAWN. My pacifists are of more importance than fifty Prime Ministers. . . .

MR LILY (*as he is known affectionately by the nation which he leads as Prime Minister, is a silvery-haired diplomat, whose curls jutting out on either side of his temples and characteristic stoop with hands behind back, are famous throughout the world. This is the gentleman, who, friend of the family, now enters the room unannounced, saying smilingly*). What is this I hear ? Something more important than a Prime Minister —impossible ! (*They stand in various attitudes,* MRS ARRAN *adamantly nonplussed ; the* GENERAL *with his*

jaw dropping; DAWN, *alone, perfectly self-possessed and unafraid.*)

GENERAL ARRAN (*apologetic*). You will excuse us, Lily, but you have just broken in upon a domestic conclave . . .

MR LILY. Unannounced. It is you who have to excuse me, but it was my fault—I told the servant not to trouble to announce me as I knew my way up —and I *did* knock, but nobody heard. (*Smiling again*) You were all so busy you know. (*Turning to* DAWN) Now my dear young lady, tell me who it is that is more important than a Prime Minister. . . .

DAWN (*smiling in spite of herself*). I said "than fifty," Mr Lily.

MR LILY. That makes it much better—I thought you meant "one"—*one* in particular.

DAWN. Well, to tell you the truth, I did. I meant *you.*

MRS ARRAN. Impossible person!

MR LILY. I hope you don't mean me, Mrs Arran.

MRS ARRAN (*much confused*). Oh, of course not, Mr Lily. I meant . . . I meant . . . (*catches* DAWN'S *eye, stumbles and stops*).

MR LILY. Now let us hear who is more important than I.

DAWN. My pacifists.

MRS ARRAN (*shocked*). Oh!

MR LILY. If all were like you, Miss Dawn, there would be less deviltry in the world, and therefore less need for diplomats—and, if you like, for Prime Ministers.

General Arran. And Generals !

Mr Lily. Oh generals of course ! If the diplomat goes, the general goes. They work together ! But I am curious to know how the personal equation of pacifist and Prime Minister came into being. (*Turning to* Dawn) Won't you tell your old friend, Miss Dawn ?

Dawn. It is only that I had arranged one of my democratic At-Homes of pacifists and labour people for 4.30 this afternoon in this room and had told my stepmother, who says she does not remember it and arranged an At-Home of her own. And I have refused to stop them—(*with a sweeping curtsey*) . . . even for the Prime Minister of England.

Mr Lily (*rubbing his clean-shaven face ruminatively*). I am not sure that this is not high treason, and as I do not wish to have you beheaded on the spot I propose that the Prime Minister lot adjourn to the dining-room and leave your pacifists to the peaceful violence which distinguishes them and which has given me so much trouble.

Dawn. You can't—we've got the papers and painters in.

Mr Lily. This is a problem of home policy which seems unsolvable. (*Taps his forehead a moment.*) I have it ! Let us meet your pacifists.

Mrs Arran (*horrified*). What !

Mr Lily. I insist. I have often wanted to meet a pacifist in the blood so to speak. So far I have only met him in the House and through the papers. We State officials never meet flesh and blood—only

reports. That is why we never know anything. Let me meet the real thing.

General Arran. But the Bishop. You know the Bishop, my dear Prime Minister. Perfectly exclusive . . .

Mr Lily. . . . and awful. Oh yes, I know Kensington. But he's a good chap at heart. Not unlike me. And he's accustomed to what we used to call "the lower orders" before the war—he started down Poplar way.

General Arran. Yes, but his is an exclusive democracy.

Dawn (*proudly*). Democracy is always exclusive.

Mr Lily. So that is arranged, is it not Miss Dawn?

Dawn. Oh so far as I am concerned, Mr Lily—yes. My people ask nothing better than to get to grips with their enemies—the trouble is that their enemies will never face them—(*bitterly*) they use the police instead. Now, if you will excuse me for a moment, I have something to do before I receive my friends. (*She goes out.*)

General Arran. I don't think you know what you've let yourself in for. These pacifist chaps respect nothing . . .

Mrs Arran (*interjaculatory*). Neither king, God, nor country!

Mr Lily. Perhaps they respect themselves.

General Arran. Perhaps they do. Anyhow they seem to think that nobody has the truth but themselves—they speak like drunken prophets.

Mr Lily. Inspiration and drunkenness are often

indistinguishable. At least I have sometimes thought so in the House.

General Arran. And you know the terrible Jim Durgan is coming.

Mr Lily. That is your daughter's, ahem! new fiancé, is it not?

General Arran. Yes. She changed her lover with her opinions. A sort of midsummer madness *I* call it—but this war has made all men mad and some women, and I have always spoiled her since her mother died. She says it was the facts of war, the very things which have turned Despard the other way—into a patriot. But I say it was Jim Durgan. It was he who converted her—she had always been a sort of secret admirer of his even in her patriotic days, and as you know there was some sort of quarrel—I never could quite find out what and Dawn is not the girl of whom one asks questions—between her and Despard. Then Durgan took her along to his meetings . . . then she made that speech in the Square . . .

Mr Lily (*smiling*). Where she nearly got into trouble with my police because she wanted to pay me a public call at Downing Street with twenty thousand other pacifists . . . oh yes, I remember. There is no half-way house about Miss Dawn.

General Arran. Dashed if I can make her out. Sometimes I think she still cares for Despard. It all came from those Votes for Women meetings before the war—now she has left them . . .

Mrs Arran. "Chucked" was the word she used.

Mr Lily (*solemnly*). Shocking!

General Arran. Says they are too bourgeois—not revolutionary enough. I can't make out what is happening to the children of the present generation—they have jumped clean away from their parents—seems as though they belonged to a different race. . . .

Mr Lily. I think they do. They belong to youth.

Mrs Arran. And now she is creating scandal by getting her photograph into the *Daily Scratch*—by appearing on public platforms (*scathingly*) at common street meetings with this man she calls her fiancé—a common worker. . . .

Mr Lily. Well Mrs Arran, I am a worker myself you know, and this man Durgan is a brave man—he is afraid of nothing. One must admire fearlessness even when one doesn't agree with the cause in which it is displayed.

Mrs Arran (*still more shocked*). You don't speak like that in your speeches in the halfpennies.

Mr Lily. One never speaks like the halfpenny papers—one dare not. Even the *Daily Hail*, the Englishman's bible, is not always altogether reliable.

Mrs Arran. I *am* surprised, Mr Lily.

Mr Lily. If you were a Prime Minister, you would never be surprised at anything. But you agree, do you not, Mrs Arran, to give me (*making her an old-fashioned bow*) the opportunity of meeting our enemies in the gate—Buckingham Gate—this afternoon—it is a unique chance ?

Mrs Arran. Of course, if you insist.

Mr Lily. Thanks, so much . . . but (*remembering something*) I had forgotten. I must speak to one of

my secretaries. Perhaps you will let me use your telephone ?

General Arran (*going out with him*). Come, I will show you the way.

Mrs Arran. And I've not yet taken off my coat and bonnet ! (*Goes out too.*)

Dawn (*holding a dispatch case, coming in with* Jim Durgan, *who brings his sweeping hat with him*). This way Jim. We don't get the chance every day to tear a Prime Minister to pieces—with perhaps a Bishop thrown in as a makeweight. Think of Bill Tutty's face when he sees the Prime Minister !

Jim Durgan (*puzzled and serious*). Here—will ye tell me what it is I am to do with my hat ? (*Whimsically*) I can't hang it on the furniture—and I can't carry it about. What is it you told me to do when I came into this sort of place ? I never can remember and we didn't have too much hat etiquette in the Dublin back blocks where I was born.

Dawn (*going up to him*). Jim, I want you to do just as you feel. Your instincts are always right and a gentleman can do anything with his hat—it is only the cad who must do the correct thing.

Jim Durgan. Well I don't know. I suppose I am a gentleman—(*ruefully*) of sorts—one of nature's, which is the artificial. But there is Despard—he's no cad (*hurriedly correcting himself*)—even though he's a traitor to everything in which he ever believed—and he knows what to do with his hat and his hands, and do what one will, one feels there is a difference—these things count, not in themselves perhaps, but they

mark a difference, an artificial difference if you like, the difference of class—the over-class and the under. You, you know, you are a lady, and I am a labour agitator, the son of a docker, and in spite of every conviction I've ever held, in spite of commonsense, there are times when I feel it like a gulf between you and me—something that holds me—the only word I can put to it—" paralysed."

DAWN. Is that why you can never call me " Dawn ? "

JIM DURGAN. Yes. That's it. It's no good—I've tried, but it won't come off the tongue. It's the class-paralysis.

DAWN (*coming close to him, earnestly*). Can I never make you feel Jim that you are my equal—nay, more, that you stand above me ? It was you who showed me the way to democracy—it was you who freed me from the slavery of class—who opened a new world to me—who taught me to love the people, and, through the people, you, so that we might give our lives to the cause of the working class and of War against War.

JIM DURGAN. That was the easy thing for me. You had democracy in the blood—you were by nature a democrat . . .

DAWN. And you by nature, a gentleman.

JIM DURGAN. I told ye once I would make you into a good Internationalist if I took the trouble, for you are a natural rebel, and I did so—but you could never make me into a gentleman.

DAWN (*turning away as though pained*). If you only

knew how you hurt me when you speak like that Jim dear. You *are* a gentleman—*my* gentleman.

JIM DURGAN. No, it's no use . . . (*hesitating a moment*) . . . Dawn. 'Tis you have the beautiful way of putting it, but facts are facts. What is it to be a gentleman ?

DAWN. I suppose it is to be gentle.

JIM DURGAN. Yes, but it's something else. It is to be equal, to feel yourself equal—neither superior nor inferior ; just equal ; sure of yourself ; conscious.

DAWN. But you are sure of yourself—of your mission.

JIM DURGAN. Yes I—we—are all sure of that—our cause is right. But are we sure of ourselves ? (*Breaking off, almost savagely*) . . . Do ye know I sometimes think we, my class, the people, can never come to power until we rid ourselves of the feeling of inferiority—the thing that's in the blood—no, not even if we vote ourselves into power—for power does not consist in majorities, not in Governments, not even in education—but in consciousness . . . yes, that's it—*consciousness*. If I am conscious of myself, as to why I am in the world, I am the superior of most men and the equal of any. A man may put my body in prison, or even the fear of God into my heart, but so long as I am his superior in consciousness I am his superior in all. Man for man I believe that my class is a better class than either of the classes above it—I believe it to have greater possibilities, is better educated because it must go to the school of life to learn and just because it *is* the under and therefore

the struggling class—but those two classes feel themselves superior and my class with the instinct of class acknowledges it, as the horse acknowledges the will behind the bridle—because they are the more conscious. That is it, I tell ye—the democracy is still unconscious, still unsure. We must work, fight, pray if you like for consciousness.

DAWN. And all that comes because you didn't know what to do with your hat. Oh Jim!

JIM DURGAN. Well, it is the hat that is the outward and visible sign of consciousness. It would not matter if it were a man's trousers or boots or a man's nails—sometimes it is all three—it's the being sure of oneself.

DAWN (*half laughing, half crying*). Oh Jim, boy, what a stickler for etiquette you would have been if you had lived in the days of chivalry!

JIM DURGAN (*earnestly*). And I tell ye, girl, until the man in corduroy learns a chivalry stricter and higher than knight ever knew—a chivalry that carries duties as well as rights—hard living and high thinking as well as voting and demanding—until we work ourselves, think ourselves, into the higher aristocracy, the aristocracy of . . .

DAWN. . . . of what?

JIM (*hesitant*). . . . well of spirit, of soul, if you like. Until we do that, we, democrats that we have the name, will never have more than the make-believe of power—we will always be the under-class even though by Act of Parliament we make our masters work side by side with us. Consciousness, I tell ye,

is the price of power, together with the thing that goes with it—responsibility. We have not yet paid it.

DAWN. But, Jim, everything you say shows that you are the equal of any man of the other classes. No man could speak as you have spoken, like a prophet, if he were not sure of himself, and, if you like, of his—what shall I call it ?—gentledom. Every word you have uttered shows that you are the equal, the superior, of men like . . . (*she stops*).

JIM DURGAN. . . . like Dick Despard, you would say ?

DAWN (*as though in pain*). We will not speak of him. He is dead to me. I hate him !

JIM DURGAN. And I—I nearly loved him. Sometimes, against all reason and instinct, I nearly love him still. He was my old comrade for seven long years—we spoke from many platforms together—until this lunatic war I never knew Despard to do a mean thing or a dirty action—I trusted him as I trust you—he was my right hand . . .

DAWN (*breaking him off, angrily*). I forbid you to speak of him. I tell you I hate him !

JIM DURGAN (*looking at her closely*). They do be tellin' me that pity's not the only thing that's near love—but hate too. Sometimes I'm thinkin' that maybe it was you that made the mistake—to take Jim Durgan and leave Dick Despard. Listen girl —you can't make mistakes here—there's a man's soul in the game. Are ye sure ye didn't make a mistake ?

DAWN. Do you wish to insult me, Jim Durgan ?

Do you think I'd care for a man who insulted me by kissing another woman—a man who has betrayed the movement ? I hate him I tell you.

JIM DURGAN. Faith you hate him too much to my thinking, girl. Love doesn't go by rule, and a pacifist might love a patriot.

DAWN. But not a traitor !

JIM DURGAN. He says he's no traitor—that the war changed him. That he is still a democrat even though he's a patriot. Be Heavens ! I think the war drove him mad, like it drove many.

DAWN. He's a traitor, I tell you. He has thrown over all his old convictions.

JIM DURGAN. But you, you also have thrown over your old convictions . . .

DAWN. Because they were wrong convictions. I hate this man I tell you, this man who has shamed me with that shameless woman.

JIM DURGAN. Is it Salandra you mean ? I will ask ye a straight question. If Salandra were out of the way, would you take Dick Despard back ?

DAWN (*in agony*). Oh Jim, Jim . . . (*she turns away her head*).

JIM DURGAN. Ye see, ye can't answer . . .

DAWN (*making a great effort*). I hate this man I tell you, and you are my man—I am yours . . .

JIM DURGAN (*coming close to her, hoarsely*). Do ye mean that girl ? For the love of Christ don't lie to me.

DAWN (*bravely*). Yes.

JIM DURGAN (*taking her hands in his and holding her*

to him). Think now for the last time. For I love you beyond all price. As God Almighty is my judge you are more to me than the stars of heaven. I first saw the light through you—I loved you before you ever knew me—though maybe I hadn't the right. Now I will kiss you and call ye Dawn . . . (*he bends down to kiss her, but as he does so, the door opens and the maid, believing her mistress is still there, announces :*)

The Maid. Mr Despard. (Dick Despard, *a private soldier, in khaki, wearing the ribbon of his V.C., comes into the room, and catching sight of* Jim *and his former fiancée who have sprung apart, makes a movement as if to go out again, but finding that impossible, takes his courage in his hands and comes forward, half making a movement to shake hands first with* Dawn, *then with* Jim, *who however pretend not to see his hand.*)

Despard. You will excuse me. I thought that General and Mrs Arran were here.

Dawn (*chillingly polite*). Won't you sit down ? I expect my father back in a moment with the Prime Minister.

Despard. Oh he has come, has he ?

Dawn (*ironically*). Oh yes, he has come, and my stepmother is also I believe expecting your other friends, the Bishop of Kensington and I think Professor Bastable. They are coming specially to meet you. (Jim Durgan *laughs unpleasantly.*)

Despard. It is more than a year since we met, but I see you are both still quite merciless.

Dawn (*blandly*). I don't quite understand you, Mr Despard.

DESPARD. I think you understand me too well, or not well enough. You accuse me of counting amongst my friends men like the Bishop of Kensington and Professor Bastable—presumably because I am no longer a pacifist.

DAWN. Well aren't they your friends ? They stand for everything for which you stand since you got your new set of opinions—and with them your V.C. What are they—your enemies ?

DESPARD. They are no more my friends than they were yours when . . . (*he hesitates*) . . .

DAWN. When I was a patriot ?

DESPARD. Yes. When you were a patriot. They stand to-day no more for my opinions than they stood for yours when you still despised the proletariat. We agree on the call of country, and on nothing else in this world. You don't play the game.

JIM DURGAN (*breaking in*). It is you who don't play the game, Despard. Why did you change ?

DESPARD. I changed for the same reason that your fiancée changed. I changed because I could not help myself. Because after Belgium was invaded, when I saw my country . . .

JIM DURGAN. What has Belgium to do with your country ?

DESPARD. It is you who are the bad Internationalist now, Jim. Do you stand only for your own country ? Don't you stand for the world ?

JIM DURGAN (*sullen*). I stand for the Socialist, the Red, International.

DESPARD. That *is* the world. When the news came

that little Belgium had been invaded by the German bully—when after the helplessness, the hopelessness, of that meeting at the headquarters of the Workers' Party, I walked out into the high, tense spirit of my own countrymen—when I saw our men march past, hopelessly outnumbered, to the terror of Mons and the Marne, to do battle for a little defenceless country—I admit I changed. How could I hold back? How could I tell the Trades Unionists of England to hold back?

JIM DURGAN (*bitterly*). You didn't. From the day when you were the first volunteer to mount the plinth at the recruiting meeting in the Square, you have done more than any one man to send our men to the shambles of the firing line, and now that England is ringing with the story of that piece of ribbon you have on your chest, your power will be trebled. . . . You didn't—more's the pity.

DESPARD. It was the call—the call of the blood—the call of country . . .

DAWN. The call of madness and ambition—the call of traitordom—of class.

DESPARD. I have not deserved that—I have not accused you of being a traitor because you have turned pacifist.

DAWN. Because you can't. I have nothing to gain by it. I have no friends to-day in high places. *My* friends have left me—*yours* have found you.

DESPARD (*with dignity*). I am not here to defend myself. But I am proud to have had the chance to serve my country—she must come first. When we

have won the war I will go back to the International. (*He turns to* JIM DURGAN) You yourself once said that no man can be International before he is national.

DAWN. You shall never come back. We don't take our enemies back into the ranks of the International that has held faith with Internationalism—into the ranks of the men and women whose cause you have betrayed.

DESPARD. Perhaps you think it was easy . . .

DAWN. Easy . . . what . . . to betray ?

DESPARD. . . . to break from my old comrades —from my old convictions. (*Speaking under strong emotion*) If you only knew what it has been to see the men and women who once were my friends in a common cause, refuse to take my hand, turn their backs on me . . .

JIM DURGAN (*harshly*). But you have got new friends, Despard.

DESPARD (*ignoring*). . . . to catch the hiss, sibilant, out of the body of my audiences—be treated as though I were a leper . . . to feel myself alone . . . alone.

JIM DURGAN. You have made your bed—you must lie on it.

DAWN (*with calculated irony, indicating the cross-ribbon on his breast*). You have your cross to bear.

DESPARD (*making a vague gesture towards his decoration*). If you think it was for this I . . . (*he breaks off*).

DAWN. What ? . . . betrayed those who have not gone out to win crosses that they can wear—but to

wear a cross of another kind which once was worn by a Peacemaker who also had his Judas . . .

DESPARD (*in indignant protest*). You . . . you are a woman without shame.

DAWN. Then I am not the first you have known.

DESPARD. Oh this—this is hideous. But I know what you mean.

DAWN (*indifferently*). Do you ?

DESPARD. You mean Salandra. (DAWN *shrugs her shoulders as she half turns away.*)

DESPARD. She at least is my friend—she has not scorned an honest change of conviction—has not refused to take my hand.

DAWN. She wouldn't.

DESPARD (*seeing the scornful smile on the girl's face*). Salandra is more than some of her critics—she is a fearless woman, an honest woman, a good comrade . . . (*Whilst the last two or three sentences have passed, the door has been standing open with the maid waiting to announce* SALANDRA, *who now sweeps impetuously past her and over to* DAWN, *who is standing farthest away from her, saying as she comes to* DESPARD :)

SALANDRA. Thank you, comrade, for that . . . I could not help to overhear-r. . . . And to you, mam'selle (*looking at her with malignant politeness*) ten thousand pardons if I am *de trop*, but I zink your At-Homes are always at half-past four—*n'est-ce pas ?*

DAWN (*icily*). Not at all. Will you not sit down.

SALANDRA (*chilled, but recovering quickly with her Latin sangfroid*). I had not expected to see Mr

Despard here. It is a pleasure unexpected. Do you await any others . . . Monsieur Tutty *par exemple ?*

Dawn (*coolly*). Only the Prime Minister. He will be back shortly with my father and my stepmother.

Salandra. The Pr-r-ime Minister ? To what do we owe the honour of this meeting ?

Dawn. To the Prime Minister himself. My stepmother had asked him and others to meet Mr Despard here for this afternoon, which, unfortunately, I had already chosen, and as this at the moment is the only room in the flat available and I refused to give way, Mr Lily suggested a sort of combined At-Home. I hope you don't mind.

Salandra. I shall be char-r-med. (*To herself*) Zeese English are all mad.

Dawn (*as* Mr Lily *enters*). Here is the Prime Minister.

Mr Lily. How are you Mr Despard ? (*Turning to* Dawn) Will you not present me ?

Dawn. The Comtesse Pologna Salandra — the Prime Minister.

Mr Lily (*graciously*). I am very happy to meet so famous a lady. (Salandra *forgets all enmity in one of her great bows.*)

Dawn (*challengingly*). And this is my fiancé.

Mr Lily (*going up to* Jim *and shaking hands with him warmly*). You need not present me Miss Dawn. I think, Mr Durgan, we have met before—that is to say, I saw you but you didn't see me. I was behind the blinds at Downing Street—you before them with Miss Dawn and a few thousand other pacifists, all

foaming at the mouth because they could not tear me limb from limb. I should be shut in even more from reality than I am if I did not know the face of Mr Durgan, the famous Syndicalist leader, and, if he will allow me to say so, a very gallant gentleman, who, you know, Despard, has faced more charges of my soldiers than I believe even you have had to face from the Germans on the West Front—although we don't give him the Victoria Cross for it. I at least am glad this afternoon to have the chance to be brought face to face . . .

THE MAID. Professor Bastable.

The PROFESSOR, *a large prehistoric creature of generally unkempt appearance, enters shaggily, tap-tapping with his stick, a red bandanna handkerchief, into which he occasionally trumpets by way of clinching his periods, pendulous from his frock-coat.*

MR LILY (*mischievously*). Oh, Bastable, let me introduce you to Mr Richard Despard, V.C. (*they bow*), Mr Jim Durgan, the Syndicalist leader (*the* PROFESSOR *looks startled but bows heavily*, JIM *somewhat awkwardly*), and the Countess Pologna Salandra. The Countess Salandra is the lady who has been described as "the most desperate woman in Europe," leader of the strikes at Milan and Paris . . .

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*looking as though he had sat on a pin*). Good God! Lily, you don't mean it . . . (*recovers himself and bows*).

MR LILY. I was about to say as you entered, Bastable, that this afternoon we are going to be

brought face to face with life and fact instead of State documents and laboratory experiments.

The Professor (*gruffly*). Facts also. (*He trumpets into his handkerchief.*)

Mr Lily. Which, by the way, need not make you look, Bastable, as though you had got into a private madhouse by mistake. We are not mad. This is only life—something it is true that poor ignorant devils like you and me don't know too much of. And oh, by the way, there will also be the Bishop of Kensington . . . (*Voices are heard outside.*)

Voice of Bill Tutty. Well, guvnor, to tell you the truf, I don't know the plice. Luv-a-ducks if that ain't the twelfthtieth stair I've barked my shins on. All right miss, it don't matter about my nime. I'm Bill to you.

The Bishop (*an ascetic, clean-shaven High Churchman, who moves through the scene that follows, close-gaitered, restrained, entering with* Bill Tutty *on his heels and shaking hands with* Dawn). I found this gentleman on the stairs.

Bill Tutty (*entirely unabashed*). Excuse ladies and gents—"fahnd"—that's *it—and* me. I should think he did. Why I ran into the reverend gent's gaiters.

Dawn (*introducing him generally*). This is Mr Bill Tutty, a friend of mine from Poplar.

Mr Lily (*as* Dawn *performs the introduction, holding out his hand to* Tutty). How do you do Mr Tutty. I know you very well indeed by reputation. You prevented a breach of the peace in the strike at the Poplar munition works.

BILL TUTTY (*shaking hands*). Well if this don't beat the band!

DAWN. This is the Prime Minister, Bill. Come, you know the Prime Minister.

BILL. Yes, I *'ave* 'eard tell on him.

MR LILY. Thank you Mr Tutty. I am glad to find I am not entirely unknown down Poplar way.

MRS ARRAN (*followed by the* GENERAL, *bustling in, much perturbed, to* MR LILY). Oh, you will never forgive me, dear Mr Lily, for leaving you alone so long, but I have been so upset.

MR LILY (*inscrutably*). I would forgive you anything, madam—you know the French proverb: *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner.*

MRS ARRAN *shakes hands with* PROFESSOR BASTABLE *and the* BISHOP *and bows distantly towards* TUTTY, SALANDRA, DURGAN, *and* DAWN, *who have instinctively drawn together for mutual defence in the right-hand back corner of room, after shaking hands with* DESPARD *who stands between both parties, looking more or less isolated and belonging to neither. The* GENERAL *however saves the situation in Irish fashion by shaking hands with all indiscriminately, being especially warm to* DURGAN *and* TUTTY *to put them at their ease.*

They are in the middle of this when the door opens apparently of itself and LANCELOT FITZ, *gliding in, seems to take in the situation from under one upturned eyebrow, looking for explanation to* DAWN *who comes across the floor to meet him and exchanges*

a few hurried words with him as she brings him forward to her redoubtable stepmother, who stands transfixed at the intrusion of the arch-rebel into the sanctity of her drawing-room.

Dawn (*to her stepmother and the company generally*). Let me introduce my friend, Mr Lancelot Fitz.

Mr Lily. Who needs no introduction.

Fitz (*quite at home, approvingly*). I am glad to hear you say so, Sir. (*Then, generally, to* Mrs Arran, *with whom he shakes hands to her extreme indignation, and the rest, to whom he bows*) De-lighted! (*Looking round*) But the first thing to do, if you will allow me to say so, Mrs Arran, is to break up this class-conscious business—I hate to see the democracy and the aristocracy at loggerheads . . .

Mr Lily. Which I suppose is your reason Mr Fitz for preaching the class-war?

Fitz (*blandly*). Pre-cisely. You will never abolish the snobdom of class until you teach each class its sacredness and its individuality. The problem before us now, however, is how to destroy the deep-laid suspicion of class and mass, bred of the fact that the *classes*, here (*he indicates the Prime Minister group*), having picked the pockets of the *masses*, over there (*sweeps a hand towards the Durgan group*), and having all the pangs of conscience in its most aggravated form, are much afraid their victims may seek to get their own back.

Bill Tutty (*irrepressibly*). 'Ear—'ear!

Fitz (*urbanely*). I am glad to find that Mr Tutty

agrees with me, so now I suggest we break up into our original human constituents. (*With an introductory sweep of his hand*) The Classes!—the Masses! (*The two groups gradually draw near under what is obviously, on the part of* TUTTY *and* DURGAN, *the* BISHOP, MRS ARRAN, *and the* PROFESSOR, *the deepest suspicion, gradually occupying the chairs which are scattered about the room, with the exception of* DURGAN, TUTTY, *and the* GENERAL, *who prefer to stand, the* PROFESSOR *subsiding into his seat in sections, colossally, like a camel. At this point the maid enters with the wherewithal to afternoon tea, which* MRS ARRAN, *none too graciously, and clearly very bad-tempered, proceeds to pour out,* BILL TUTTY *entirely at his ease putting the cap upon her high displeasure by drinking, audibly, out of his saucer.*)

DAWN (*masterful and mischievous*). Now that you can't get away from us Mr Lily, I should like to know what you really think about the war—without the mask on?

MR LILY. I shall be most happy to take off the mask, but first of all I should like to know what you think about it. Mr Tutty for instance?

BILL TUTTY (*sarcastically, putting down his cup and saucer*). Oh yes, I know—and 'ave a free fight.

MR LILY. I don't fancy Miss Arran was thinking so much of fighting when she mentioned the war, as of non-fighting—of pacifism.

BILL TUTTY. No bloomin' pacifism 'ere, Mr Prime Minister—we'd wreck the place—I've been in the Brotherhood Church! I've 'ad some brotherhood in

my time, *I* 'ave. So 'as the reverend gentleman if it comes to that. 'E's been called some nimes—'e 'as.

The Bishop (*drily*). Judas, amongst others, I believe.

Bill Tutty (*sententiously*). 'Cos 'e sold 'is Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

Mr Lily. What I think we want to do is to get at one another's point of view.

Bill Tutty. And not at one annuver.

Mr Lily. You have a happy way of putting things, Mr Tutty.

Bill Tutty (*graciously deprecating*). Natur' guvnor, natur' !

Mr Lily. We want to find out, not one another's weaknesses but one another's strong points. The man who only knows his own side—like the Bishop of Kensington and myself for instance—doesn't know even that.

Bill Tutty. 'Ear—'ear ! *That's* what *I* call democracy. Wot you might call the plain facts.

Mr Lily. Perhaps, Mr Tutty, there *are* no plain facts in the twentieth century.

The Professor (*solemnly*). There are the facts of science—immutable. (*He trumpets.*)

Fitz. So immutable that no two scientific men agree upon anything for twelve months together—one reason why the common people, under the impulse of war, are going back to the immutable facts of the other world from which the churchmen (*here he bows blandly to the* Bishop) have led them in company with their friends the scientists (*he bows to the* Professor).

General Arran. All this talk is beyond me. I am only a plain soldier, but I flatter myself I *do* understand the pacifist case—and that is, with all deference to my daughter and Mr Durgan, that they haven't got one. Despard soon found that out—didn't you Despard ? (Despard *looks acutely miserable at this appeal, his discomfiture being enjoyed maliciously by* Dawn, *gloomily by* Jim Durgan, *as he is silent.*)

General Arran. Why don't you speak man ?

Despard. The thing is not so easy as that, General —especially when one hates war.

General Arran (*beginning to be irritated*). Oh, dash it all ! Despard—*you* know, everyone knows, that a man's first duty is to his country and to obey. If you are told to go into the firing line you've got to do it and no argument. I hate war as much as Mr Durgan there or yourself, but you must have somebody to do the killing. Everybody knows that.

Jim Durgan (*deeply*). But *everybody* does not know it. *I* don't know it. We pacifists don't know it.

General Arran (*still more irritated*). I'm speaking of men who are not afraid to die. I'm not talking of pacifists !

Bill Tutty. Here come the spacifics—now for bloody murder.

Jim Durgan. Do you and your class think dyin's the only thing in life ?

General Arran (*loftily*). My class has never been afraid to die.

Jim Durgan. Arrah General, what's the matter

with ye ? Do ye think dyin's the only thing ? Living is the thing I tell ye !

General Arran (*apologetically*). I am sorry Mr Durgan if I conveyed a wrong impression—we all know you to be a brave man. But I can't make out what you are driving at.

Jim Durgan. I've felt the wind of death on me face oftener than you General, for all your medals—from the time when as a little gossoon in Dublin I faced the cold hunger to . . . well it doesn't matter about that . . . and I tell you any fool can die—dyin' isn't the quality of the gentleman, for it's Death that is the Democrat—it takes a wise man and a brave one to live.

Despard (*as though out of himself*). Yes, that's it ! It's living that matters. Any fool can die. I've seen men die over there in France—fool and genius they die the same—only the man of imagination is sometimes the coward. It's living that matters.

General Arran (*thunderstruck*). And you say that, Despard—you who wear what you wear on your tunic !

Despard. Yes, I say it. Some day men will get the Victoria Cross for living. To-day we crown Death with our laurel wreaths.

Jim Durgan. Why didn't you say all that before you went and made a fool of yourself ?

Mr Lily (*rubbing his hands gleefully*). Delightful ! Did you hear that Bastable—and you Bishop ? Just think of describing the winning of the V.C. as " making a fool of yourself ! " This is the palace of truth . . . " making a fool of yourself " . . . Ha—ha !

Despard. But in spite of what I've said, dying is

the thing that matters now. The noblest thing a man can do to-day is to lead his men over the top to meet death in the open—death for his country.

General Arran. Ah, that's more the talk. That is *life*.

Despard. You mean—death.

Dawn. In which you have specialised, Mr Despard, as that piece of ribbon shows. That was not the cross for which its Founder died—was it Bishop ? (*There is an awkward silence.*)

The Bishop (*taking up the challenge*). I confess I am with Mr Despard when he says the noblest thing a man can do to-day is to die for his country. Someone has written : " He that saveth his life shall lose it." Despite Mr Durgan, it is sometimes more glorious to die than to live.

Jim Durgan. I was not talking of glory.

The Bishop. But there *is* such a thing as glory. All life, and therefore all death, should be a beatification. The call of country is a holy call—the present war a crusade—a holy war.

Dawn. So holy that the Prince of Peace were He on earth to-day would have taken part in it . . . ?

The Bishop (*gravely*). If He who said : " I come not to bring peace but a sword " were on earth to-day, I am assured He would have donned khaki even as I, his unworthy representative, sometimes don it. He would have gone down into the trenches . . .

Jim Durgan. . . . and driven his bayonet into his German brother with " the twist in the guts ? " . . . (*There is another silence. Jim laughs gratingly.*)

Fitz (*breaking the tension*). After listening to all this, I have reached the conclusion that I am the only living man who has a logical view of war. Where have you got to in all this ?

Mr Lily. So far as I can see, we have been discussing religion in connection with war—in which our revolutionary friend Mr Durgan has shown himself on the side of the angels, and the Bishop of Kensington—what shall I say Bishop ?—on the side of the devil . . . very improperly discussing it.

Mrs Arran (*interjaculatory*). I *quite* agree.

Mr Lily (*mischievously*). That his lordship is on the side of the devil, Mrs Arran ?

Mrs Arran. Good Lord ! no. I hope I am much too religious for that.

Bill Tutty. I think we've 'ad enough religion for one afternoon. Anyhow war's not religion—war's a science.

The Professor. Mr Tutty, with whom I probably have not one idea in common, is, it seems to me, right. War is not a question of religion—war is a question of science.

Fitz. But I thought the Bishop of Kensington had shown in his book *Religion and Science—a Popular Fallacy*, that they were friends, not foes—in fact, one and the same thing. Is that not so Bishop ?

Salandra (*aside*). Thees ees nonsense, or madness. In this country zey are all mad.

Professor Bastable (*embracingly crushing*). I am not sorry to have to differ. Religion and Science are neither friends nor foes, for the simple reason, as I have

shown in my book *The Idea of God*, that religion is only a miasma of the imagination and therefore has never had any existence. It has no more existence than the immaterial.

Bill Tutty. There's a lot of miasma knocking abaht dahn Poplar wye—you take mine. Arsk the reverend gent there.

Fitz. The new dogma. The scientist has taken the place of the priest—aren't you jealous, Bishop ?

The Professor (*immovably*). Science has the right to be dogmatic. She deals in facts, not in fictions—in flesh and blood, not in ghosts. Man has left the "religious" stage and entered the "scientific." War, as I said, is a question of science—it has been proved indisputably to be a necessary concomitant of all racial progress—is the driving force of life on the globe. The capacity to war is the measure of the national capacity and marks the right of the nation to existence.

Fitz. Nietzsche *redivivus* ! pure Prussianism, which, incidentally, with your friend the Bishop of Kensington, you are so keen upon destroying.

Professor Bastable (*whom nothing can move*). All part of the inevitable struggle for life. (*He trumpets again.*)

Bill Tutty. 'Ave yer seen hanyfink of ahr little struggle dahn in Poplar ?

General Arran (*mildly surprised*). But surely Professor you believe us to be fighting for the right, the truth, in this war ?

Mrs Arran (*erupting*). For God, for king, and for country !

FITZ. Not forgetting that every truth is a half lie—and every lie a half truth.

THE PROFESSOR. Oh yes, General, if you admit such popular delusions as right and wrong, truth and lie. If we were Germans we should also be fighting for the right—the only right . . .

MRS ARRAN. Are you stark raving mad, Professor!

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*impassively*). . . . the only right—to serve the ends of nature.

BILL TUTTY. An' this is wot they calls natural.

PROFESSOR BASTABLE. Nature is not concerned with right or wrong. As a matter of fact, as Nietzsche has shown, there *is* no right or wrong. She is only concerned with reaching her ends when and how she can. Slaughter is her method—we can't change it. Professor Ulrich . . .

BILL TUTTY. Another bloomin' furriner!

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*looking majestically at Tutty*). . . . Professor Ulrich has shown beyond dispute that just as alcohol has been one of nature's most fruitful means to culture, as proved by the fact that the world's most cultured nations, like the Romans and Greeks, have all been consumers of alcohol, teetotalism like pacifism indeed being a mark of degeneracy—so war has proved of inestimable benefit to the human race . . .

MRS ARRAN (*half to herself*). This man is indeed a Prussian!

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*still immovably*). . . . of inestimable benefit to the human race.

BILL TUTTY. With cork legs, glass eyes, and bashed brains, all complete.

Professor Bastable. As a point of scientific fact, demonstrated beyond cavil by Professor Krapotsky of Moscow, the modern artificial limb, built up on scientific methods, is far superior to the one it replaces. It is not subject to aches and pains—it is immune to disease and fatigue.

Bill Tutty. W'y don't you go to the West Front, 'ave a hoperation performed by a German 15-inch, and get fitted, Professor ?

Professor Bastable (*continuing*). The weight of the human body upon the springed leg causes an automatic reaction, making it in many cases positively easier to walk than with the limb of flesh and blood. Artificial limbs *are* in fact better than limbs of flesh and blood . . .

Jim Durgan. And glass eyes, perhaps, than seeing ones ?

The Professor. I will not go so far as that—but science will doubtless in time find a substitute for the human eye.

Dawn. And heart !

The Professor (*solemnly*). Perhaps—nothing is impossible to science, Miss Arran.

Bill Tutty. Wot I sye is—w'y not habolish the 'uman ?

The Professor. I don't understand you, Mr Tutty.

Bill Tutty. Tike 'im to pieces bit by bit. Start with a leg and a wing, then the hinsides—then a heye, and finish up with the 'ed.

Mrs Arran. The man's a perfect nightmare !

Fitz. The nightmare of Science—no disease and no soul.

Professor Bastable (*argumentatively*). "Soul" is a comparative term—perhaps permissible in the unscientific to express humanity.

Mrs Arran. I am glad at any rate you have some humanity left.

The Professor. Do not misunderstand me. I do not wish to hold out any false hopes. When I say "humanity," I mean the quality of being human, not humane. (*Blandly dogmatic*) I use the word in the sense of "human being." A simple illustration will point my argument—for instance, men are human beings—women not. (*Trumpet.*)

Mrs Arran (*explosively*). Good Heavens! Do you mean to tell me that I am not human?

The Professor. In my book: *Has Woman a Soul?* I have proved absolutely that woman is but a male adjunct—a male organ as one might phrase it—an organ of reproduction. (*Gravely*) The female of the species is not a human being.

Mrs Arran (*aside, but louder than she knows or cares*). And this, good Lord deliver us! from a man who cannot wash his own face without his wife to hold the soap, and who packs his bag and goes away every time she is going to (*scathingly*) become "an instrument of reproduction."

Mr Lily (*conciliatory*). But where does call of country come into all this?

Professor Bastable. That is perfectly simple to the scientific mind. What we term "the call of

country " is but a call of nature like any other call, used by nature for her own purpose—to stimulate bloodshed and the survival of the fittest . . .

FITZ (*enquiringly*). Who by the way are . . . ?

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*smoothly*). Those fittest to survive.

FITZ (*trying another way*). Then why not help nature by pulling up the drainage system, scrapping the hospitals, and founding " survival " laboratories for the propagation and freeing of germs ?

THE PROFESSOR. The intensification of what may be termed the normal struggle for life on the planet has been suggested by Marshall Krude and other advanced biologists who feared that the English race might become stodgy through the long years of peâce we have, not enjoyed, but suffered, and which, in the words of a very distinguished soldier, "needed blooding." But (*in full satisfaction*) the present war will help to keep up the *morale* of the race and to further the survival of the fittest—(*ruminatively*) will help . . . will help.

MRS ARRAN. Oh you Bismarck, you !

SALANDRA. Thees is indeed ze lee-mit. Thees man is mad—zey are all mad these English, but he is week-edly mad, this man.

GENERAL ARRAN. But what kind of talk is this, Professor ? This war is not a question of biology—it is a question of right and wrong. Both sides can't be right, and the question at issue in this war is as plain as the nose on your face—quite apart from country—so plain that any man, even a German, can decide on its merits—for or against . . .

Fitz. The curious thing being, under the circumstances, that half the German nation is not fighting for England and half the English for Germany.

General Arran (*stubborn and irritable*). Anyhow everyone knows that we in this country go to war only from the highest and purest motives—because we are patriots and love our native land.

Professor Bastable. So do the Germans—the call of the blood—the call of nature. (*He trumpets triumphantly into his handkerchief.*)

The Bishop. It is not to science that we Churchmen take exception, but to this type of science.

Fitz. Personally, my only objection to science is that it reduces the number of unknown truths.

The Bishop. But this kind of talk is not scientific, for, as my unexpected ally, Mr Lancelot Fitz, pointed out, the scientists are completely illogical. In the Church, however much we may differ upon matters of dogma, we at least are logical in this war, upon which, believing as we do that the call of country is a sacred call, not, if the Professor will let me say so, a scientific call—all of us, Churchman and Wesleyan, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian, have given our blessing.

Fitz. And upon which your "unexpected ally" would point out the reverend gentlemen of Germany and Austria, not to mention Turkey and other countries of Holy Christendom, have also given their blessing.

General Arran (*exploding*). Oh damn it all! (*Recovering himself shamefacedly and addressing himself pointedly to the* Bishop) I beg your pardon, Bishop

—I mean confound all these arguments about science and religion—as though a soldier—I mean, er, patriotism, had anything to do either with one or the other. You fight for your country because you can't help fighting—unless you're a cad or a coward. As a soldier, your business is to fight—to do what you're told—not to argue or think. Where would the army be if the men started thinking ? Oh, confound it all ! the thing's as plain as daylight. Put it like this. I believe in honour and telling the truth, in a general way—but if it came to that I'd lie myself into Hades for my country and (*turning with unexpected suddenness upon the Prime Minister for confirmation*) so would the Prime Minister himself—in fact he has to do it—he's a diplomat—that is to say . . .

Bill Tutty (*irrepressibly*). A bloomin' liar ! (*Covering his mouth quickly with his hand*) Oh excuse—beg pawdon !

Mr Lily. Don't mention it Mr Tutty.

General Arran. Well that's about it. Where would the country be if everyone started telling the truth ? Where would any Foreign Office in Europe be ? You've got to lie and to go on lying and glory in it if it comes to that, just as the soldier has to obey without argument. That's what he's for.

Fitz. And your limits, General ?

General Arran. The soldier's obedience knows no limits. Where there are limits, there is no army, for there is no discipline.

Fitz. If your superior officer tells you to bomb from the air a fortified town in which you are morally sure

to kill non-combatant men, women, and children—will you do that ?

General Arran. Unhesitatingly. Military necessity.

Fitz. If you are asked to shoot down your own countrymen in a strike—will you do that ?

General Arran. Absolutely. Duty.

Fitz (*insinuatingly*). Now General, if in this discipline which has no limits, you are told by your superior to bayonet without mercy every unit of an enemy contingent which has fired on the White Flag—a punishment quite permissible by the rules of war—and in charging, as indeed has happened, find yourself before a white-faced boy still in his teens who begs piteously for his life—would you bayonet him ? (*The* General *is silent.*) (*Persuasively*) Come now General—have the courage of your discipline. Would you ?

General Arran (*explosively*). Damned if I would !

Fitz. Now we see your limit. So it is the soldier's duty to obey—but only to a point, which will vary with the individual—which lets in thought and Democracy and with them Religion and Science. (*Turning to the Prime Minister*) Now, Mr Lily, let us see your limits.

Mr Lily (*holding up his hands*). Mercy ! mercy ! Mr Fitz. I can't produce them. I haven't got any. I am a diplomat.

Fitz. And you, Bishop ?

The Bishop. As a Churchman, the only limits I know are those prescribed by my conscience and my

God. I have nothing to do with the duty of either the soldier or the diplomat—I am not responsible for them . . .

FITZ. Who was it that said : " Am I my brother's keeper ? " (*The* BISHOP *is silent whilst* FITZ *waits, remorseless.*)

DAWN. Ask Mr Despard for his—he is neither diplomat nor churchman—(*mockingly*) who is only there to obey his superior officer. Come, Mr Despard —where are *your* limits ? But perhaps you have none ?

JIM DURGAN (*deeply*). Come, Despard. Have the courage of your new convictions. Maybe you can convert us. Don't be afraid to put the word to it.

SALANDRA. Oh ! but zis is not vot you call ze fairplay. You are all against one leetle man.

DAWN. I do not think you are right, Comtesse. Mr Despard has with him the consolations of the Church as of science and diplomacy—he has with him nine out of ten of the crowd—and (*pointing to the decoration on his tunic*) he has the full satisfaction that comes from acknowledgment. Against him, he has only the pitiful convictions of his old comrades by the side of whom he once stood. No—he has everything with him. (*Pitilessly*) Let us have his limits. (JIM DURGAN *laughs. There is a strained silence as all look at the young man who sits half facing the audience.*)

DESPARD (*looking up from where he sits, his head sunken, the light of battle in his eye*). You shall know my limits—but first I shall know yours. Come Fitz. You don't stand for discipline or the obedience of the

soldier. What *do* you stand for ? Do you stand for a meeting of the men before each charge, before each advance, with voting and Democracy full-blood ? If you don't stand for obedience to officers, do you stand for disobedience ? (*He pauses.*) Do you stand for an army at all ? (FITZ *looks at him sardonically with one eyebrow lifted but does not answer.*)

JIM DURGAN (*rushing into the breach*). Of course he doesn't stand for blind obedience and secret diplomacy and lying for country and the spy system.

DESPARD. I haven't asked what he *doesn't* stand for, but for what he *does*. He's a brilliant analyst—let us see if he can be synthetic.

FITZ. At the moment I am only *pa*thetic.

JIM DURGAN. He stands, as we all stand, for the refusal to do the bidding of kings and tyrants—to shoot down our brothers of other lands with whom we have no quarrel—he stands for peace.

DESPARD. At any price ? (*There is no answer.*) . . . *And* for non-resistance ?

JIM DURGAN. What—whom is there to resist ?

DESPARD. Your German brothers amongst others —ten millions of them.

GENERAL ARRAN. Hear—hear !

JIM DURGAN. Let 'em come and take the cursed country. *We* don't own it anyhow.

DESPARD. Come Jim ! you're an Irishman—the man of all men who has preached fight against what *you* have always called "the superimposition of a foreign yoke"—you of all men have demanded the right of the small nations to govern themselves—and now it

is *you* who speak coolly of letting the Germans come to superimpose a foreign yoke upon another country, without resistance, as they have done in Belgium. Where is your logic ?

BILL TUTTY. One on the point ! A fair knock-aht Jim. (DURGAN *sits sullen.*)

DAWN (*eruptive*). Here is logic if you want it—if you like, a woman's logic. No word-pulling either of politician or patriot can justify the killing of one man by another. You may license your slaughter by the livery of blood—you may glorify it by pen and tongue —you may bless it by priest, but you can't alter the fact that all killing is murder. We pacifists are sure of that.

DESPARD. Are you ? Is Jim Durgan sure ?

DAWN (*indignantly*). Of course he is sure.

DESPARD. Then it is not true that he stands, if necessary, for physical force in his General Strike against militarism ? (*Turning to* DURGAN) Is it ? (JIM *is silent.*)

DAWN. We women at any rate are sure of it.

SALANDRA. Eet ees not true !

DAWN (*angrily*). What is not true ?

SALANDRA. That all killing is murder. To die on ze barricade of ze General Strike is not murder—but martyrdom. It ees not murder to shoot ze officer who tells you to slay your brother—but justice. . . . And you—you also are for ze General Strike ?

DAWN (*still more angry*). But all killing *is* murder. The strike for which I stand is the strike of passive resistance—not of blood.

SALANDRA. Blood! You are afraid of ze blood. But I tell you it is we women of ze revolution who will meet blood with blood—the sword with the sword—reach our ends by the bullet, not the ballot.

PROFESSOR BASTABLE. The struggle of nature. *Idem semper.*

DAWN. And we—we stand for non-resistance and for love. That is how we shall win war from the world.

SALANDRA (*contemptuously*). And I say—you are cowar-r-rds—you that are creatur-res of ice—you who have water instead of blood. You—you talk of love! You do not know how to love (*she looks at* DESPARD), for you do not know how to hate. I—I prefer-r ze people like Mr Despard, who sees not as I see, yet is with me—people of blood and passion.

DAWN (*icily*). I congratulate you upon your adherents, Mr Despard. So much for *your* logic.

DESPARD. And yours—where is yours? You stand for non-resistance. Let us come back to our limits, as Mr Fitz might say. Will you let the Germans come into England without resistance?

DAWN (*coldly*). Yes I would.

GENERAL ARRAN (*pained*). Oh, Dawn!

DESPARD. Will you stand by whilst they enslave English womanhood as they have enslaved Belgian—driving women and young girls to a foreign land? (*As* DAWN *hesitates*) Come now—have the courage of *your* convictions.

DAWN (*stubborn, finally*). I would not resist.

JIM DURGAN. Nor I. All countries are the same to the dispossessed.

DESPARD (*with cold deliberation*). And you who also preach non-resistance—would you stand by whilst an enemy soldier attempted your fiancée's honour ?

MRS ARRAN. Oh, this is shocking !

DESPARD (*implacably*). Would you ? (*He waits a moment.*) . . . Would you ?

JIM DURGAN (*deeply*). No, by God !

DESPARD (*to* DAWN). And you—would you not resist ? . . . to save your honour, would you not even kill ? (*The girl with flaming cheeks is silent.*)

DESPARD. So much for *your* logic.

MR LILY (*easing the tension*). But where is your own, Mr Despard ?

DESPARD (*sadly*). I haven't any. There is no such thing. But at least I don't pretend to have any . . . I feel myself as I have often felt myself over there (*he waves one hand outwards, vaguely*), a blind tool in the hands of blind fate, without thought or direction. I do not pretend to logic—that is for the gods—I only obeyed instinct — blind instinct — the instinct of country, as—if you will—those opposing millions obeyed theirs—those men whom I love and hate together—with whom I feel myself one though divorced.

PROFESSOR BASTABLE (*rumblingly*). The call—the call of nature—the battle for survival—instinctive—fundamental !

THE BISHOP. No—the universal love—the divine in man.

DESPARD. How often out there under the moonless stars amongst the creeping silhouettes of No Man's

Land, the thunder of the guns momentarily stilled, have I asked myself: "What is the good of it all? Why am I here? Those others—over there? What is it that is stronger than we—we, who, separate, have no quarrel?" When I have heard near me the breathing of my comrades, caught the silence of the spaces—I have said: "Why do we die?" And the answer, like some doubtful echo, faint, has come: "We die that others may live." . . . "But what others?" . . . And to that there is never any answer.

Whilst he speaks the others sit silent, DAWN *staring at him with open eyes and parted lips.*

DAWN (*as though coming out of a dream, breaking the silence*). But there *is* an answer. If you soldiers kill and maim and die, it is that you may teach the lesson of death to the children of life—the children of the future—the children to whom we, the women, will give life—the children that we shall teach in the age that is coming—the Age of Woman. It is the woman who, in the day when her country will be the world, will proclaim a league of War against War—the war of thought against the war of act—of love against hate. She will fight it from the world, not by killing but by teaching the child in the cradle that all war is murder. For it is woman, weak woman, who with her soft white body and gentle fingers will break the shackles of gold and iron which to-day weigh so heavy on the earth.

DESPARD (*ungovernably acquiescent*). Yes, yes, that

is it. That is the answer. It is the woman who will be the revolutionary. And she will take the man, not only as lover, as husband, but as comrade, by the hand—they will go forward to the new conquest—the conquest of life—together.

DAWN (*angry, contemptuous, standing up*). No, not together—not until man comes from the wantonness of slaughter. She will not take the bloodstained hand of the soldier, Mr Despard. He shall travel his reddened path alone . . . or with, if you will, comrades of the other sex who have forgotten the lesson of woman to life—the lesson of love—to follow with the male his age-long path of passion and of death.

She goes from the room as though under uncontrollable rage and contempt. During this, SALANDRA *looks gloatingly at* DICK, *as though now sure of him, whilst the others stare after the girl.*

MR LILY (*for the first time nonplussed*). I think I must be going now Mrs Arran, if you will allow me. We have I am sure all had a most interesting afternoon, though . . . (*he breaks off sharply*) that does not matter however.

He takes his leave, the others following one by one, all, with the exception of SALANDRA, *evidently distressed for no apparent reason,* SALANDRA, *triumphant, coming last.* GENERAL *and* MRS ARRAN *accompany their guests out into the hall, the former saying to* DESPARD *in passing :*

General Arran. Oh, Despard, I wish you would stay behind for a few moments—I have something to say to you.

Despard *waits behind, wretchedly dejected. Whilst he stands there, his head and shoulders hanging, the voices of the others being heard outside in leave-taking,* Salandra, *slipping away from the others, darts back through the half-open door, which she closes quickly, stands a moment, her back to it, her hand on the handle, and then comes rapidly across the room to him with her characteristic glide.*

Salandra (*speaking rapidly and low*). Now, Dick, you see. What did I tell you ? She is an *infâme*—that woman. She has shamed you in ze light of day . . . before the others. Oh Dick—do you remember when I asked you at the Workers' Party's headquarters before the war, as I have asked you so often since, you who say you hate war, to lead with me, throughout Europe, the General Strike against war—War against War, not by word, but deed ? The world is ripe for it now after the blood-letting. Come with me—to me, Dick—oh will you not come to me ! I have stirred you before to passion—you know I stir in you what she does not—I stir the blood . . . you have once said it. . . . (*she has drawn closer to him, placing one hand on his arm, and reaching up with the other to pull him down to her, when the door opens and* Dawn, *who has forgotten her despatch case, comes in, catches sight of the couple and with set face and icy look passes over*

to the table, takes the despatch case and passes out without looking again at them.)

SALANDRA (*with hot breath, reaching up again to* DICK). Now, you shall come to me. You shall give her reason for her look. You *will* come to me!

DESPARD (*staring irresolutely into her eyes, then with a supreme effort*). No, by God! no. Ten thousand times, no. I have lost my sweetheart—I have not lost my honour.

SALANDRA (*more passionately, wrathy, as she feels him going from her*). But you *shall.*

She makes a convulsive movement to him, and kisses him full on the lips. As she does so, the man, mad with passion and resentment, hurls her from him, SALANDRA *falling face downwards on the floor, and goes out of the room, as the curtain slowly falls.*

(*End of Act II.*)

ACT III

Characters

Dawn Arran.
Jim Durgan.
Richard Despard.
The Countess Salandra.
Bill Tutty.
Voices in the Crowd { The Man in the Crowd. / The Woman in the Crowd. / Other Voices.
Policemen, Mob.

(*A few days have elapsed.*)

The voice of a speaker comes from behind the curtain, which goes up upon a shouting mob in Trafalgar Square a few days after the previous Act, the pacifist meeting being in its last half-hour on this September afternoon. The plinth of the Nelson Column looks picturesque with its banners of blue and green and red and gold in the autumn sun. On the plinth stand Dawn Arran *and* Salandra, Bill Tutty *and* Jim Durgan, *with others—labour leaders, pacifists, conscientious objectors, etc.*

Salandra *in her great slashed hat, natty jacket, and tight-fitting skirt, a splash of red on her breast, is addressing the crowd in excited rolling accents, it being evident that the mass of the mob is patriotic, and bellicose, who resent a foreigner telling them their own business—but there is a pacifist minority*

also present which makes itself felt at the critical moments and makes up in exuberance what it lacks numerically.

The Voices in the Crowd are for the most part Eastenders —DESPARD, *however, who is not seen, having wedged himself under the plinth.*

A line of sleepy, sceptical policemen stand at the foot of the plinth, their helmets showing above the crowd.

SALANDRA (*continuing her speech as the curtain rises*). . . . your French comr-rades, your Italian comr-rades, wait for ze day when you, zere English comr-rades, will refuse to go to the slaughter bench—refuse to bow the knee to your master-r-rs—refuse to kill to do mur-r-der-r. They ar-re waiting for ze day when ze Citizen Army, rifle in hand, will thr-row ze Red Flag of ze Inter-rnational to ze wind, dr-rag down ze Union Jack, shoot their officer-rs, and br-ring death and destr-ruction to ze capitalist class . . .

THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Oh you beautiful pacifist! You're a nice old cup of tea. Tork abaht a gawden of roses . . .

SALANDRA (*misunderstanding*). I zank ze gentleman for ze compliment. But this is not ze time for ze compliments . . .

BILL TUTTY. And you're not getting them.

THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Nah then, old Bill. Wot are you a-doin' of up there with that little lot? You're a nice old bloomin' pacifist—you are, I *don't* fink. Who stopped the munition strike dahn Poplar wye?

BILL TUTTY (*with fine sarcasm*). You didn't—that's

a cert. You never stopped anything in your life except work. (*Roars of laughter.*)

SALANDRA (*continuing and imperfectly understanding*). But my brothers . . .

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD (*piercingly*). Who're yer callin' bruvvers to—y'aint in ahr fambily. You're a bloomin' furriner . . .

SALANDRA. But so are ze French and ze Russians, whom in ze papers you call your brothers . . .

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. They're all right. They're furriners, but the right sort. None of your measly sausage snatchers . . .

SALANDRA. . . . your brothers, just as are ze Germans . . . (*Roars of dissent from the crowd.*)

SALANDRA (*much puzzled*). They are waiting I say, these, your br-rothers, for ze day. They follow only one flag, ze flag of ze International, ze Red Flag . . .

THE MAN IN THE CROWD (*sarcastically*). . . . which o' course is why they're goin' balmy for the chance to follow the rags of their own countries—why the *Hi*talians are shouting bloody murder against their Hostrich brothers ; the Roosians . . .

SALANDRA (*still misunderstanding*). They, with you, declare they never-r-r never-r-r will be slaves . . .

As she reaches the word "slaves," the crowd, led by THE MAN IN THE CROWD, *sings :*

"Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves.
Britons never, never, ne-e-ver shall be slaves,"

against which the pacifist minority vainly tries to sing "The Red Flag" :

" Then raise the scarlet standard high,
Beneath its shade we'll live and die . . . "

but are drowned out in the thunderous repetition of " *Rule Britannia.*"

The rest of the speech is drowned in cheers, counter-cheers, yells, cat-calls, and all the sweet exuberance of a London crowd, one being only able to see the opening and shutting of the mouth of the infuriated French-woman, who, finally, has to desist in spite of JIM DURGAN *coming forward to shout incoherently in the face of the mob, quiet only being restored by* RICHARD DESPARD, *whom* DURGAN *makes a motion to wave back, and who clambers up on the plinth in khaki, shouting :*

DESPARD. Fairplay, boys ! Fairplay's a jewel.

THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Three cheers for Despard, V.C. ! (*Three deafening cheers are given, finished off incompletely by a solitary half-broken cheer coming from the over-enthusiasm of* THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD, *succeeded by a roar of laughter.*)

DESPARD. Don't mind me—I don't matter. Fairplay's the thing that matters. I ask you to listen to the pacifist case . . .

A VOICE. They 'ave no case.

DESPARD. Then it can't do any harm to hear it ! Let them talk.

A VOICE. Oh, damn talk ! Let's do something.

ANOTHER VOICE. Let's break up the blarsted meeting.

ANOTHER. Or *them* ! (*Howls of assent from the mob.*)

DESPARD. Steady on, boys. A broken head's no argument.

THE VOICE. A damn fine argument, *I* call it.

DESPARD. I call it a bad one. A nice tale to be told by our enemies.

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD (*with a laugh*). Dead men tell no tales.

THE VOICE. Then you admit they *are* our enemies.

DESPARD. Of course I do. They are national enemies.

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. Then let's aht 'em !

OTHER VOICES (*together*). { That's right—aht 'em ! / Do 'em in !

DURGAN. Coward ! Despard, coward !

A VOICE. Who said that ? Lynch the swine.

DESPARD. Who calls me coward ?

DAWN. Traitor !

DESPARD (*turning white-faced to his former sweetheart*). Woman or no woman, you shall yet answer me for that !

DURGAN. And you shall answer *us*.

A VOICE. Give him one in the jaw, Despard.

DESPARD (*to the crowd*). But you *shall* listen.

A VOICE. Who says *shall*.

DESPARD. I do.

A VOICE. Who are you, Mr bloomin' V.C. ?

ANOTHER VOICE. 'Oo says "bloomin' V.C." ? Smash 'im up ! German spy !

OTHER VOICES. { Smash 'im up—spy—spy ! / Aht 'im ! Spy ! / Spy—spy !

(*There is a momentary scuffle.*)

DESPARD (*passionately*). I say you *shall*. The man who refuses to hear the case of his enemy is no man.

A VOICE. Who's pleadin' for the bleedin' swine ?

A VOICE. Now, 'oo's the German spy ? Despard 'imself's one o' their friends.

ANOTHER. We'll give you somethin' for yourself Mr V.C. if you don't mind your tricky tongue ! (*Despard stands there white and impotent.*)

JIM DURGAN (*comes again to the front. A howl of rage goes up as the man stands there with blazing eyes, trying to speak*).

VOICES. { We won't hear you.
That's Durgan—the traitor !
He's in the German pay I tell ye.
He led the strike at the Peterhead munition works.
Lynch the blighter !
Crucify him ! (*This from* THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD.)

JIM DURGAN. Crucify me if ye like. I'm not the first the likes o' you have crucified.

A VOICE. Blasphemy ! Blasphemy !

ANOTHER. Where's your damned religion, Durgan ?

(*Screams, yells, howls, out of which comes curiously the singing of "Keep the Home Fires burning," leaving* DURGAN *helpless as the song is taken up by the crowd.*)

DAWN (*coming to the front*). Well boys, if ye won't give fairplay for a man, will ye give fairplay for a woman ? (*She looks appealing as she stands there in*

her autumn toilette, winning by her appearance instant silence from the crowd, who look curiously at her. She is without a hat, for as she comes to the front of the plinth she hands the close-fitting toque on her head to JIM DURGAN, *who holds it for her.*) Friends !

A VOICE. We ain't yer friends.

THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Wot ! Annuver female. (*Series of cat-calls, howls, cheers and jeers.*)

A VOICE. Fairplay for the lydy.

ANOTHER. W'ere's the lydy ? She's a suffrageeter I tell yer—I seen 'er many a times a-torkin' from that there plinth. She's no lydy.

THE VOICE. Hold your jaw !

THE OTHER VOICE. 'Oo're yer a-torkin' to ! If I only 'ad yer aht of this 'ere crahd. (*There is a scuffle, whilst* DAWN *waits patiently as the gentlemen settle their differences. From the turmoil is heard :*)

VOICES. She ain't no lydy . . . she's a female . . .
She's a suffragette.
You're a liar !
You're another.
She *ain't* no lydy. (*This in accents of passionate conviction.*)

DAWN. Well perhaps I'm not. But I'm a woman.

THE LAST VOICE. Nah ye're torkin'.

DAWN (*with much humour and tact*). Then that's all right. I'm no lady—the gentleman who has interrupted is of course a gentleman—and . . . (*She is broken off by shouts of approving laughter from the crowd who are quite captured and now listen with close interest and attention.*)

DAWN (*continuing*). You have been told from this platform to fight the sword with the sword, to raise the barricades in our streets, to shoot your officers, and to add pandemonium to hell. I come with another message . . .

SALANDRA (*coming half forward with angry eyes*). You shall not say that . . .

DAWN (*continuing*). . . . with another message—the message of non-resistance, of peace . . .

A VOICE. Oh yes, we know, a German peace . . .

DAWN. No, not a German peace, but peace on earth. The message I have to give you is—We will not kill!

SALANDRA (*shouting*). But we will!

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. 'Ark at the pacifists a-fightin' amongst theirselves.

DAWN. We will not kill! That is the message that I, a woman, give to the woman in the crowd . . .

THE WOMAN'S VOICE. 'Oo are ye a-callin' a woman to?

DAWN. I am sorry it is still a term of reproach—I mean the lady.

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD (*mollified*). *That's* better.

DAWN. I am so glad. For my part I am satisfied to be a woman with other women, and the message that we women are going to give to the world is the new message—the message of the bloodless revolution . . .

JIM DURGAN (*hoarsely*). Ye can't make omelettes without breaking eggs. Ye can't make revolution without breaking heads.

SALANDRA (*triumphant*). You see your lover is with me.

DAWN (*proudly*). I go further than my lover! (*To the crowd*) No killing! No murder! All war is murder!

A VOICE. Even war in defence of country?

DAWN (*ignoring*). Can you not see that we are all human beings?

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. Not the German swine . . .

DAWN. . . . all human beings . . . we are all in the same boat . . . we as people of the earth share a common fate and a common destiny . . . we say that one Saviour died for all of us . . .

A VOICE. Not for the bloomin' Germans.

DAWN. We rise or fall together—together we rise to godship or sink to the level of the beasts that use teeth and claws, as humanity has sunk in this war. Is there any woman here who will suckle her little helpless child that it may tear the life out of another little helpless child suckling over there . . . (*she throws her arm outwards*) whose only crime is that it has been born on the other side of the channel? Is there any woman? (*She waits for a second amidst the continuing silence.*) I go further—is there any doubt where He who once took the little children in His arms and blessed them would find Himself were He amongst us to-day—with patriot or with pacifist? (*A silence.*) Would He be devising new means to kill or maim or blind? Would He not sooner open His almighty arms to all the sons of men? Would He not have all men to be saved?

A Voice. No, He wouldn't.

Another. He'd be in khaki.

Another. Blasphemy!

Another. The lady is right Bill—ye can't walk round it.

Dawn (*still holding the meeting*). You who listen to me know all of you in your hearts that He would. I am a soldier's daughter—I come from what is known as the ruling class—I have all my life been taught to regard the calling of the soldier as the highest of callings—but, to-day, I say that all war is murder! (*Murmurs of disapproval, but the girl holds on her way resistlessly.*) I say that all war is murder . . .

Despard (*coming half forward*). . . . All war is *not* murder—defence of country . . . (*his voice is drowned in approving shouts*).

Salandra. Mr Despard is r-r-ight—we all have the right of self-defence—the working class also!

Dawn (*blazing round at* Despard *in the lull*). You draw your adherents from all camps . . . like your women . . .

Despard. This is too much! It is too vile. And once I believed in you.

Dawn. And I in you. (*Getting outside herself and turning again to the meeting*) And I tell you—you—the man who has said that is himself a traitor—a traitor to his former comrades—a traitor to your class.

A Voice. Traitor yourself!

Dawn (*now mastering herself and the meeting*). I a traitor! No! What have I to gain by playing traitor? Can I strut upon a plinth before a gaping

crowd with a piece of metal on my breast ? Can I be acclaimed by the Yellow Press as the saviour of my country ? Traitor ! No ! A thousand times no ! I am no traitor.

A Voice. Wot do you want us to do ?

Dawn. Do ? What I want you to do is not for yourselves alone—not for your wives and little ones—but for the world. I want you to down tools when the word is given in the day of the General Strike. I want you to send a cry through Europe—the cry that will be taken up by the workers from land to land—the cry . . . " We will not kill ! " . . . a cry never to be stifled until the tap of the drum, the blare of trumpet, and the tramp of armed men are no longer heard in Europe. That's what I want you to do !

Led by the enthusiastic pacifist minority as she finishes, the crowd cheer uneasily, a cheer slashed here and there by a hiss, but it is obvious they are wavering, when Durgan, *seeing the chance passing, comes forward, being greeted by three cheers from his supporters and with uneasy silence by the mass of the crowd.*

Jim Durgan. My sweetheart says she goes further than me—I, I say I go further than she. Boys, I am one of you. I have worked by your side. You know me, Jim Durgan. Have I ever gone back on you ? Have I ever betrayed my class ?

A Voice. No, Jim, no.

Another. That's right.

DESPARD. That's an appeal to prejudice, Durgan. It's not fair!

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. Wot's not fair? 'E's a good old working man—but you—you're a swasher.

JIM DURGAN. Fairplay, Sarah! (*Laughter from crowd.*) (*Sarcastically*) The gentleman's only standing up for his class—it's his business. (*More laughter.*)

DESPARD (*to both meeting and speaker*). That's not playing the game, Durgan.

JIM DURGAN (*contemptuously*). Which game—your game?

DESPARD. The only game. The game of the gentleman.

JIM DURGAN (*bitterly*). I'm no gentleman.

DESPARD. You used to be.

JIM DURGAN. I'm no gentleman and thank God for it! I don't come to you boys to talk as a fine gentleman—only as a working man. Will you listen to me or to him?

VOICES. { To you.
Go on.
Let him shut his jore!

JIM DURGAN. Now boys you may not agree with me or you may, but when I speak to you to-day it is not for your agreement but to put my point of view before ye and leave ye to decide the rights of the question.

A VOICE. That's fair enough.

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. Go on, old Jim! (*Laughter.*)

THE MAN IN THE CROWD. Good old Jim. Three

cheers for old Jim ! (*Three cheers reverberate around the Square, are taken up by the rows on the outside who don't know for what they are cheering, circle back again, and the crowd falls to silence.*)

JIM DURGAN. Then that's all right boys. Thanks. I don't speak to-day as a pacifist, as a General Striker, but as a man talking to men—as a working man talking to other working men. I come to speak, not for us grown men and women but for the kiddies.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE. That's the tork. Go on.

JIM DURGAN. You know that the longer the war goes on the more hungry will be the kiddies, and every month means you tighten one more hole in your belts . . .

VOICES. That's true ! / That's gospel ! / etc., etc.

JIM DURGAN. Will war fill a hungry belly—will medals fill empty hearts ? All this talk of national honour means for your class and mine national dishonour.

DESPARD (*jumping half forward to protest*). No—no !

A VOICE. *Won't* you hold your rah !

JIM DURGAN. . . . national dishonour. You can win the war and lose your soul. . . . Where are your political leaders ? They have gone over to the enemy.

VOICES. Yes—yes !

JIM DURGAN. Where is Grummit ?—in the Ministry of Labour, snug for life. . . .

VOICES. That's true ! / Give it 'em, Jim !

JIM DURGAN. Where is Johnson ?—pensioned—safe.

A VOICE. *You've* said it.

DESPARD. He has a right to his pension. He has led the working class the right way.

JIM DURGAN (*ignoring*). Where are the others—maddened sheep led from one division lobby to the other at the tail of the Government.

A VOICE. A donkey's tail.

JIM DURGAN. No, the ass is at the other end. (*Roars of laughter.*) That's why I say boys that this war is a lie—a lie of the diplomats. That's why I say to you—strike—strike—and again strike ! (*Murmurs of approval.*) That's why I say to you when the word is given, we shall paralyse the government, stop the munition factories, and win back for ourselves the right to live. (*Enthusiastic cries of assent.*)

A VOICE (*evidently of an educated man*). By what right do you tell these people to strike ?

JIM DURGAN. By this right. (*Holding his hands out.*) Look at my hands—are they white and soft ? Look at the scar on my face (*the crowd are following intently and with excited interest*)—I got that in one of your devil factories. I am flesh and blood as you. I have worked as you. I have the right to speak. I will speak. And I say here, now, that any man who does not down tools when the signal goes and . . . (*he pauses significantly*) if driven to it, take up others, with sharpened edges, is a traitor, double-dyed, a traitor to his children, his class, and his . . . (*he hesitates*) . . .

DESPARD. Why don't you say it . . . are you afraid of the word ?

JIM DURGAN (*wavering*). What word ?

DESPARD. The word you dare not say . . . *Country !* (*A dead silence, succeeded by a low murmur, like a distant breaking sea, rising and subsiding.*)

DESPARD (*coming well forward, his face pale and set*). What about the country—the country for which the workers of England are dying over there ? What about the call of England ? What about the call of the blood ? (*The murmur rolls again up from the crowd, this time with a higher note.*)

A VOICE. Yes. That's the point. What about our country ?

JIM DURGAN (*hesitating for a fateful fraction*). Our country ?

A VOICE. Yes, that's it Durgan. Our country. Why don't you speak up ?

VOICES. { Come—speak up !
Speak up—speak up !

JIM DURGAN. Why . . . our country . . .

A VOICE. Out with it. What abaht our country ?

JIM DURGAN (*still more hesitant*). Our country . . .

DESPARD (*seeing his advantage*). Come Jim Durgan. What will you do with the country ? Will you let the Germans in ?

VOICES. { Go on Despard.
Good old Despard !
Give it him.
. . . and let the beastly stinkin' swines in.

JIM DURGAN (*desperate*). I have no country—you have no country . . . (*Pandemonium breaks loose and the crowd begins to sway against the plinth, leaving* DURGAN *pale with passion, gesticulating unavailingly, his mouth opening and closing;* DAWN, *her hands clenched stiffly at her sides shouting something incoherent into* DESPARD'S *face as he looks coldly over her;* SALANDRA *malevolently triumphant; and* TUTTY *with his whimsical sceptical smile.*)

DESPARD. *I* have a country! (*Cheers and countercheers.*) *You* have a country! Let those who have no country go to their country. (*Jeers and laughter.*) Let them go to the countries of our enemies. (*Howls of assent.*)

JIM DURGAN. Blast you, Despard! You shall pay for this.

DESPARD (*wheeling on him*). And *you.* (*To the mob*) Who is it that tells you fattened satiated life is better than glorious death—better than the deaths died by the men of your own class over there where, as I speak, the guns beat into the dying sun . . . ?

A VOICE. Cowards who are afraid to die . . . like Durgan.

JIM DURGAN. Who dares to say that!

THE VOICE. I do. If you're not afraid to die, prove it by going to the front—into the firing line.

OTHER VOICES. Yes, prove it—prove it!

DURGAN (*with intensity*). I *will*! I won't kill, but I'll go as an ambulance man.

DESPARD (*contemptuous*). Bravado! Durgan—bravado!

DURGAN. You shall see.

DESPARD (*to the crowd*). . . . who dares to turn you, Englishmen that you are, from the country that bore you—from the flag ?

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD. Three cheers for the good old Union Jack ! (*Three deafening cheers are given.*)

DESPARD. " Man does not live by bread alone ! " (*He pauses.*) . . . And the flag—what is the flag ? It is the symbol of your co-ordination and cohesion as a nation. It is the symbol of freedom collective and freedom personal. It is the symbol of the liberty of the Greatest Empire the world has ever known . . .

DAWN. Where is your Internationalism, traitor ?

DESPARD. To hell with my Internationalism ! I am nationalist and patriot, first, now, and for all time ! (*He shouts this in the face of the crowd who are now with him and standing on tiptoe to cheer him.*) When England has settled her national affairs—put her national house in order—she will put in order the House of Internationalism . . .

JIM DURGAN. You mean she will rule the world—dominate the earth . . .

DESPARD (*beside himself*). Yes, dominate if you will—dominate because she has the right to dominate (*tremendous cheers*)—the right of the free country which has set a pattern for others to follow . . .

A VOICE. Oh you bloomin' Prussian !

DESPARD (*exalted*). Not Prussian, but Englishman. If we dominate, it is to set the earth free . . . if we take into the almighty bosom of the motherland the

little peoples, it is to make them free of the earth . . . if we, haters of war that we are, rouse ourselves to fight the Moloch of Militarism, it is that the world may be loosed from its beastliness . . .

DURGAN. Despard—are you mad ?

VOICES. { Shut up !
You've had your say.
Close your cursed trumpet !

DESPARD. Mad—yes. Mad with the horror of Germanism . . . mad with the fate of little Belgium . . . crazed at the sight of my own countrymen who refuse to shoulder a rifle to free the world from the terror of Junkerdom. . . . And what shall we say of those who refuse to do so ? What shall we do, boys, with the traitors and traitresses (*he looks at* DAWN) who have deserted England in the hour of her need ?

THE VOICES (*taking a redder note*). { Lynch 'em !
Shoot 'em !

THE WOMAN (*piercingly*). Crucify them !

DAWN (*to* DESPARD). Coward !

DESPARD. No, boys, we will not kill. We will leave them to their conscience and their God . . .

A VOICE. They ain't got no Gawd.

DESPARD. . . . Then leave them to the evil bloodless spirit they serve. But one thing we *will* do. From now forward no man or woman shall take them by the hand—no friendly word shall greet them . . . they shall meet neither comment nor curse, only silence, the silence of their eternal shame. None shall give them to eat or drink. None shall marry them or bury them. The man who loves a pacifist must tear

her from his heart (*he looks at* DAWN) . . . the woman who loves a " conscience man " must pluck him from her breast as she would pluck a serpent. They shall suffer the eternal boycott, both in this world and the worlds to come.

A VOICE. That's not good enough. Lynch 'em !

ANOTHER (*laughing*). There's a fine strong lamp-post in Downing Street. (*A crackling laughter from the crowd.*)

ANOTHER. I have a rope.

ANOTHER. Burn 'em !

THE WOMAN (*piercing*). Crucify them !

MANY VOICES TOGETHER. { Yes, that's it ! / Crucify 'em ! / We can get the hammer and nails in a jiff.

(*The crowd begins to whimper and move.*)

DESPARD (*frightened at the storm he has conjured*). No boys, no !

A VOICE (*mimicking*). Yes boys, yes. (*Laughter.*)

DESPARD. No—there must be no bloodshed.

A VOICE. Yer said it yerself !

DAWN. Murderer !

DESPARD. To do this would be our own eternal disgrace and the disgrace of the cause in which we believe.

A VOICE. Oh, damn disgrace ! Let's get to work. (*Another sway towards the plinth in which the policemen begin to draw their staves.*)

DESPARD. Boys, the meeting is closed.

THE WOMAN. No, by God! it's open. (*There is a rush towards the plinth. Men and women are hoisted up over one another, clambering like wild beasts on to the stone platform, being thrown off by the occupants. Others are pouring after, sweeping aside the handful of police.*)

A VOICE. It's Durgan we want. We'll lynch Durgan.

ANOTHER. Fairplay for the woman!

ANOTHER. Wipe the lot aht!

ANOTHER. Shame! No boys—Durgan's our man.

DESPARD (*as they rush towards* DURGAN). You shall not touch him.

ANOTHER VOICE. We will. See the coward—he's afraid to die.

ANOTHER. Stand out of the way yourself, Despard, or we'll do you in too!

ANOTHER. Despard's one of 'em—damn him!

DAWN (*rushing forward at the last moment as she sees* DESPARD'S *life threatened*). You shall not hurt him . . . (*in acute distress*) Oh, Dick—Dick!

JIM DURGAN. Oh, Dawn—oh!

DAWN (*under anguish uncontrollable*). I love him, I tell you.

DESPARD. Stand back . . . I've finished with you!

The rush comes once more and as the leading files, after at last getting a footing on the plinth, almost reach DURGAN, DESPARD *flings himself between them, fighting desperately, but is borne down. There is one final rush, and the curtain falls as the crowd reach their prey, with* DESPARD *underneath.*

(*End of Act III.*)

ACT IV

Characters

Dawn Arran.	The first Doctor.
Richard Despard.	The second Doctor.
Jim Durgan.	A Nurse.

(*A year has elapsed.*)

Jim Durgan, *now ambulance man and still pacifist, blinded for life by a shell-burst, lies on his thin bed in a hospital building at the West Front on a hot August night, in the year following the Square meeting. There are two beds on either side of him and four along each of the other two bare pine-plank walls, filled with the silent figures of wounded men. In the back wall are two windows, and a window and door respectively in the right and left walls, the sun setting through the back windows a fiery deep red, illumining the room.*

As the curtain goes up, a nurse is busying herself with a patient in one corner of the ward, whilst a young doctor, in his white dress, is standing looking thoughtfully at the wounded man, who lies in a comatose condition. He turns away after a moment, and sighs, and as he does so, an older doctor comes in, a tall heavily spectacled man. Their conversation is punctuated by the shudder of the guns in the far distance.

THE ELDER DOCTOR. Well, how are things going ?

THE YOUNGER. All right Sir—except for Durgan. I can't quite make him out. If it were not that his heart and symptoms generally are normal I should think him in a bad way. He lies there hour after hour in the comatose condition he has been in since they brought him here a few days ago, with intervals of consciousness, when he keeps asking for Captain Despard, who is coming to see him this evening . . . then he says something about "dawn," or "the dawn" . . . but he does it all as though he were . . . (*he hesitates*).

THE ELDER DOCTOR. . . . as though he were what . . . ?

THE YOUNGER. Well, Sir, as though he were heartbroken . . . that's the only way I can put it—even if it isn't professional. It is as though he were tired of life.

THE ELDER. He has reason. (*He pauses a moment.*) . . . You know his story, Brink ?

THE YOUNGER DOCTOR. Well, Sir, I have heard scraps. I know, for that matter I think everybody in England knows by now, that although a notorious pacifist, he volunteered for the ambulance and rescued Despard under a rain of high explosive in No Man's Land—something which meant death sure and quick to any man who ventured into it.

THE ELDER. Yes, that's the bald fact. But there is something more. It seems that Despard, reconnoitring alone, had been shell-shocked and wounded in the left arm, and was lying unconscious out there, when

Durgan heard about him and went out alone in the grey dawn just after the German shell fire had reached its height, reaching Despard by the freak of chance and bringing him in across his shoulder—he has the strength of a giant. He was almost in safety when the shell burst under him which blinded him for life, and they tell me it was heart-rending to see the blinded man grope round for his unconscious burden, hoist him again on his shoulder and stagger in. . . . It was a rare deed in a war of rare deeds. That's all I know.

THE YOUNGER. But I can't make out what brought Durgan out here—I always thought he was a pacifist and wouldn't touch war.

THE ELDER. Perhaps you never heard of that historic pacifist meeting in Trafalgar Square some twelve months ago, which ended in the crowd rushing the plinth, after they had taunted Durgan with being afraid of his skin, when he cursed them and said he would go out as an ambulance man to France—he wouldn't kill but he wasn't afraid to die—and, by Jove! I think he's proved it.

THE YOUNGER. Oh yes, I heard of it—though not that last. All the men out here heard of it and it led to something like a free fight amongst the London regiments—it seems we had some pacifists amongst them who hadn't been able to persuade the tribunals that they were genuine conscientious objectors, though they proved it pretty clearly by fighting like devils . . . there were Irishmen amongst them. The story went that Despard had infuriated the crowd

against the pacifists and that they tried to lynch, some said to crucify, Durgan, the leader—only being prevented by Despard throwing himself between him and the mob until the police reserves were able to pull the big Irishman out of the ruck.

THE ELDER DOCTOR. I suppose you know Despard was lying in hospital in London for some months as a result of the attack—they nearly killed him ?

THE YOUNGER. Yes—and that his former sweetheart, General Arran's daughter, tried to stop them and was also badly injured. Some said she tried to save Despard—but that must be nonsense, for she is a well-known pacifist and Despard a patriot.

THE ELDER. It was not nonsense, but fact. And that is the trouble at the moment. As you know, she has to-day been transferred to this camp and is nursing in this ward, and it is about her I have come to see you. Of course she doesn't know that Durgan is here. She must not be allowed here—it might kill him.

THE YOUNGER. But why ? I don't quite understand, Sir.

THE ELDER. I happen to know her father and some of the details of the Square incident from behind the scenes. It seems that Durgan discovered when she tried to save Despard, to whom she had been engaged, that she still loved him, and like a decent man he offered to release her from her engagement. Durgan is the gentleman. But that didn't help any, and nearly broke his heart—for now Despard won't have anything to do with her—seems they quarrelled about the war . . . the eternal quarrel of country . . .

THE YOUNGER. And Despard may be in to see him at any moment!

THE ELDER. Yes, he is now nearly all right—he lies in the adjoining ward and we expect to send him home in a few days. Another reason why his former sweetheart must not be on duty here. She comes on duty soon—(*looking at his watch*)—by Jove! in a few minutes. She will probably come straight in after changing, so will you please see that she is intercepted and transferred to one of the other wards. I shall expect you in the operating room within a few minutes.

THE YOUNGER DOCTOR. All right, Sir.

THE ELDER. Well, so long. Let me know if there is any change for the worse. (*He goes out, the other doctor busying himself over another patient and giving some whispered instructions to the nurse in charge. All at once he looks at his watch and turns hastily to the nurse saying:*)

THE YOUNGER DOCTOR. Oh, I clean forgot the time, and they are expecting me in the operating room! (*He hurries out.*)

A moment or two after he does so, the door opens and DAWN, *looking chastely beautiful in her nurse's costume, comes on for duty. She exchanges a few words with the nurse in charge, who points to* DURGAN'S *bed in particular, and goes over to his bed as the door closes upon the nurse she has relieved. She walks over indifferently, but as she draws near, a shudder runs through her, a sudden quickening. She draws closer as the man lies there, apparently*

comatose and unheeding. After a moment, she bends over him to make sure. As she does so, the bandaged head stirs a little.

JIM (*stirring uneasily*). You have come at last. (*After a moment's silence*) Why don't ye speak ? Is it that ye can't bear to look on me ?

DAWN. Jim. Oh Jim ! Is it you ?

JIM. I knew you would come—I prayed that you would, and I saw you coming 'twixt sleeping and waking as I saw you the day you first came to me—the day after the International meeting at the Workers' Headquarters.

DAWN. Don't Jim. You break my heart.

JIM (*pleasantly*). My own was broken long ago alannah. I am through that as I am through many things. That is all behind me now. There is nothing before me but a dead wall.

DAWN (*in anguish*). Don't Jim, don't. Oh don't.

JIM. Ah, don't let that throuble ye, girl. The light of *my* world was quenched before that shell came —at the end of the Square meeting when you gave the cry that told me it was not me that had your heart but Despard. All went black then. . . . Maybe I won't see again until I see the streets of gold in their shining glory . . . and the doctors won't tell me if me eyes will ever open more. Ah don't let that throuble ye. But all the same, it's hard if me eyes are dark. It's easier to die maybe.

DAWN. Oh, Jim, I heard the story. You gave yourself—something more than your life—to save . . .

(*after a pause*) . . . him. "No man hath shown greater love than this—to lay down his life for his friend. . . ."

JIM (*whimsically*). Faith it wasn't for me friend at all, but for me enemy . . . sure it's Despard that hates me. . . .

DAWN. He cannot hate you, Jim. He must love you even as I love . . . (*she checks*).

JIM. No, dear, no. But I understand all the same. But it is Despard has the long hate as maybe he has the long love. It was he that always had the desperate strain in him. . . .

DAWN (*sadly*). I know that. But that's all past.

JIM. Past ?

DAWN. Yes . . . but we won't speak of that.

JIM. Now I'd like to ask ye something—but ye must promise as you hope for heaven that ye will tell me the truth. . . .

DAWN. What is that, Jim ?

JIM. But ye must promise. Will ye promise ? It is something that matters very much to me . . . (*after a moment*) . . . or maybe not so much. . . . Will ye promise ?

DAWN. Yes, I'll promise.

JIM (*after a moment*). Am I dark for ever ?

DAWN. What is that . . . dark . . . ?

JIM. 'Tis the way we have of sayin' it in Ireland.

DAWN. Of saying what . . . oh, yes . . . now I know. . . . Oh Jim, Jim !

JIM. Ye will tell me the truth—but maybe I know it already.

DAWN. Oh, Jim !

JIM (*with dignity*). There's no need to answer. You have told me. So that's finished. (*After an interval*) Oh but it's the quare thing that I'll never see the sun again, nor the shadows passing across the mountains . . . that I'll never see birds flying nor water running . . . dark—dark for ever. . . . Well it's God's will.

DAWN. Oh Jim, you are breaking my heart.

JIM (*his face lighting as though an idea had come to him*). And 'tis mendin' it I hope to be.

As he says this, the door opens and DESPARD, *now a Captain, comes in, his left arm in a sling. He looks hesitatingly around and finding* JIM, *comes over to the bed, not seeing* DAWN'S *face which is shaded by her hand, her back to him. He goes to the other side of the bed.*

JIM (*sharply*). Who's that ? (*Then, as he realises*) So you've come Dick ? Faith all the world is gathering here to-night. But it was good of ye. Who do ye think is here ?

DAWN *takes her hand away from* JIM'S, *which she has been holding, and makes as though to withdraw, shrinking.*

JIM (*sensing this and reaching again for her hand which he retains*). Ah don't go. You must stay. Are ye there Despard ?

DESPARD (*bowing his head as he catches sight of* DAWN'S *face*). Yes Jim. I'm here . . . here to ask

your forgiveness. I see many things to-day I didn't see before. I have wronged you—and you . . . you gave more than your life . . . for me. . . .

JIM. But not before I stood in your debt. You saved me at the Square—sure it was a debt. I had to pay it back again. It isn't lettin' me go through life, or death, with a debt on me shoulders you'd be ?

DESPARD. But that was nothing—it was done in a moment. This you did deliberately—through minutes that were hours. I can hear now the burst of the high explosive when heaven and earth seemed to be coming together as I lay there in a dream—a dream of death.

JIM. It was the little thing to a man who was tired of life.

DESPARD. Tired of life. Why tired of life Jim ?

JIM. Ask her. Maybe she knows.

DAWN. Oh, I cannot bear this. I must go. I must go.

JIM. You can't—your place is here. Will ye explain—or must I do that for ye too ?

DAWN. I must go. Oh what shall I do !

JIM. Stay here. Do ye remember, Dick, the old days when we stood side by side on the pacifist platform ? Do ye remember how we pledged ourselves to go through with the work we had begun ?

DESPARD. Yes, Jim, yes.

JIM. And then ye remember the International meeting, when I knew you were shaken. I knew it better than you—I saw it in your eyes—when the call of country came to ye ?

DESPARD. Yes Jim.

JIM. Oh but that was the blood callin'—callin'. And 'tis many have heard the call since that day—the call of the blood—the call of country. And then came that day in Buckingham Gate when, Dick, and I say it now, I nearly hated you—you that once I nearly loved. And then there was the meeting in the Square after ye had gone through the country calling on the workers to follow you on the long lone road—when you nearly gave your life for me who hated you. And then there came that morning in the grey of the dawn . . . (*The guns shudder through the building as he pauses.*) Hark at the guns—how they shudder!

DESPARD (*bitterly*). Don't mind the guns Jim. They've done *their* work.

JIM. Maybe they've done yours. (*The guns come again.*) Well, Dick boy, it was then I was blinded —blinded—but now I see. The scales have fallen from my eyes. I see more clearly now, blinded, than when my eyes were keen and strong and I saw the shadows chasing themselves on the slopes of Slieve Bloom. I think the sight came to me when I lost that other. Shall I tell ye what I saw?

DAWN. Jim, you must not speak. You must not. It is bad for you . . . and I am responsible.

JIM. I will not be speakin' much again, girl. Blind men are quiet men. And I must say what I have to say whilst the spirit is on me . . . (*he breathes heavily a moment*) . . . I saw that war is the strong medicine—I have had some of it. If men won't see in the daylight, they must see in the darkness, when the blind people see—when, under the veils of night,

heaven draws down to earth and the sons of mankind catch the beating of wings . . . see visions . . . and dream dreams. . . .

As he has been speaking, the room has gradually been darkening, the sun now low on the horizon.

DESPARD. Yes, Jim, yes.

JIM. I saw that no man can say where right lies to-day—for we are blind—blind. Those men over there are right after their light. We are right after ours. They go to battle with the love of country and the blind hate in their hearts, even as we go. They, like we, are but shadows of something else—the Shadow that Stands Behind. And Dick . . . it is the same with us—with you and me and the girl here. We are shadows . . . led by that other shadow which men call . . . God. I am pacifist, you are patriot—but I am patriot too and fighter too . . . and you pacifist.

DAWN. Go on Jim, go on.

JIM. There is something stronger than pacifism, even than country—that is love. But love can find itself not through ignoring country, but through finding it. The men and women of to-day, patriot and pacifist, Nationalist and Internationalist, noble hearts both, must agree to differ . . . and, sometimes, Dick . . . Dawn . . . hear me . . . to *love.* To love and differ, until the greater day when all the nations of the earth shall be one. . . . (*After a pause*) Do you understand—both of ye ?

DESPARD. I understand.

DAWN *hides her face in her hands.*

JIM DURGAN (*whimsically*). Faith it takes two to make an understandin'. Reach me your hand here, Dick. (*He fumbles about for* DESPARD'S *hand which he holds.*) And you, girl—where is yours ? (*He feels for her hand, placing it in that of* DESPARD.)

JIM. Now that ye understand, I can go into the night that is waiting for me . . . the night that through the little ones who will come after you—the children of the future, girl, you once spoke about that day of long ago . . . will be lightened by the Greater Understanding.

A last ray of the dying sun falls upon him as the girl throws herself across the bed, her hand in DESPARD'S, *sobbing her heart out whilst* DESPARD *bends over her, fondling her hair and whispering.*

The guns come shuddering through the place . . . there is a silence in which a trumpet-call is heard wailing itself out into the setting sun as the curtain slowly falls.

THE END

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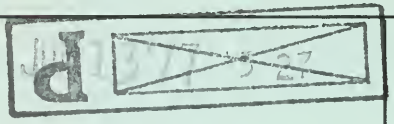

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